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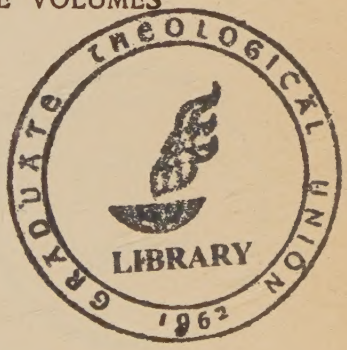

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THE GENERAL EPISTLES

OF

ST. JAMES AND ST. JUDE

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INTRODUCTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES.

THIS volume is to treat of the General Epistle of St. James and the General Epistle of St. Jude. According to the most common, but not invariable arrangement, they form the first and the last letters in the collection which for fifteen centuries has been known as the Catholic Epistles. The epithet "General," which appears in the titles of these Epistles in the English versions, is simply the equivalent of the epithet "Catholic," the one word being of Latin (*generalis*), the other of Greek (*καθολικός*) origin. In Latin, however, *e.g.* in the Vulgate, these letters are not called *Generales*, but *Catholicæ*.

The meaning of the term Catholic Epistles (*καθολικαὶ ἐπιστολαι*) has been disputed, and more than one explanation may be found in commentaries; but the true signification is not really doubtful. It certainly does not mean *orthodox* or *canonical* although from the sixth century, and possibly earlier we find these Epistles sometimes called the Canonical Epistles (*Epistolæ Canonicæ*), an expression in which "canonical" is evidently meant to be an equivalent for "catholic." This use is said to occur first in the *Prologus in Canonicas Epistolas* of the Pseudo-Jerome given by

Cassiodorus (*De Institt. Divin. Litt.*, viii.); and the expression is used by Cassiodorus himself, whose writings may be placed between A.D. 540 and 570, the period spent in his monastery at Viviers, after he had retired from the conduct of public affairs. The term "catholic" is used in the sense of "orthodox" before this date, but not in connexion with these letters. There seems to be no earlier evidence of the opinion, certainly erroneous, that this collection of seven Epistles was called "Catholic" in order to mark them as Apostolic and authoritative, in distinction from other letters which were heterodox, or at any rate of inferior authority. Five out of the seven letters, viz. all but the First Epistle of St. Peter and the First Epistle of St. John, belong to that class of New Testament books which from the time of Eusebius (*H. E.* III. xxv. 4) have been spoken of as "disputed" (*ἀντιλεγόμενα*), *i.e.* as being up to the beginning of the fourth century not *universally* admitted to be canonical.[1] And it would have been almost a contradiction in terms if Eusebius had first called these Epistles "catholic" (*H. E.* II. xxiii. 25; VI. xiv. 1) in the sense of being universally accepted as authoritative, and had then classed them among the "disputed" books.

Nor is it accurate to say that these letters are called "catholic" because they are addressed to both Jewish

[1] "Canonical" (*κανονικός*), from canon (*κανών*, connected with *κάννα*, "a reed or *cane*," "measuring-rod or ruler"), is used in both a passive and an active sense. A canonical book is primarily one which has been measured and tested, and secondarily that which is itself a measure or standard. Just as a cane, cut to the length of a yard-measure, thenceforth becomes a yard-measure itself, so the Scriptures were first of all tested as to their authority, and then became a standard for testing all other teaching; *i.e.* they became *canonical*.

and Gentile Christians alike, a statement which is not true of all of them, and least of all of the Epistle which generally stands first in the series; for the Epistle of St. James takes no account of Gentile Christians. Moreover, there are Epistles of St. Paul which are addressed to both Jews and Gentiles in the Churches to which he writes. So that this explanation of the term makes it thoroughly unsuitable for the purpose for which it is used, viz. to mark off these seven Epistles from the Epistles of St. Paul. Nevertheless, this interpretation is nearer to the truth than the former one.

The Epistles are called "Catholic" because they are not addressed to any particular Church, whether of Thessalonica, or Corinth, or Rome, or Galatia, but to the Church universal, or at any rate to a wide circle of readers. This is the earliest Christian use of the term "catholic," which was applied to the Church itself before it was applied to these or any other writings. "Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be," says Ignatius to the Church of Smyrna (viii.), "just as where Jesus Christ is, *there is the Catholic Church*,"—the earliest passage in Christian literature in which the phrase "Catholic Church" occurs. And there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the epithet in this expression. In later times, when Christians were oppressed by a consciousness of the slow progress of the Gospel, and by the knowledge that as yet only a fraction of the human race had accepted it, it became customary to explain "catholic" as meaning that which embraces and teaches the whole truth, rather than as that which spreads everywhere and covers the whole earth. But in the first two or three centuries the feeling was rather one of jubilation and triumph at the rapidity with which the "good news" was spreading,

and of confidence that "there is not one single race of men, whether barbarians or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered, through the name of the crucified Jesus, to the Father and Creator of all things" (Justin Martyr, *Trypho*, cxviii.); and that as "the soul is diffused through all the members of the body, Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world" (*Epistle to Diognetus*, vi.).[1] Under the influence of such exultation as this, which was felt to be in harmony with Christ's promise and command (Luke xxiv. 47; Matt. xxviii. 10), it was natural to use "catholic" of the universal extension of Christendom, rather than of the comprehensiveness of the truths of Christianity. And this meaning still prevails in the time of Augustine, who says that "the Church is called 'Catholic' in Greek, because it is diffused throughout the whole world" (*Epp.* lii. 1); although the later use, as meaning orthodox, in distinction to schismatical or heretical, has already begun; *e.g.* in the Muratorian Fragment, in which the writer speaks of heretical writing "which cannot be received into the Catholic Church; for wormwood is not suitable for mixing with honey" (Tregelles, pp. 20, 47; Westcott *On the Canon*, Appendix C, p. 500);[2] and the chapter in Clement of Alexandria on the priority of the Catholic Church to all heretical assemblies (*Strom.* VII. xvii).

[1] Comp. Ignatius, *Magn.* X.; Irenæus, *Hær.* I. x. 1, 2; III. iv. 2; V. xx. 1; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VI., *sub-finem*; Tertullian, *Apol.* i., xxxvii.; *Adv. Judæos*, vii., xii., etc., etc.

[2] It has been remarked that this play upon words (*fel* and *mel*), which cannot be reproduced in English, is an argument against the theory of a Greek original.

The four Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul were the Christian writings best known during the first century after the Ascension, and universally acknowledged as of binding authority[1]; and it was common to speak of them as "the Gospel" and "the Apostle," much in the same way as the Jews spoke of "the Law" and "the Prophets." But when a third collection of Christian documents became widely known another collective term was required by which to distinguish it from the collections already familiar, and the feature in these seven Epistles which seems to have struck the recipients of them most is the absence of an address to any local Church. Hence they received the name of Catholic, or General, or Universal Epistles. The name was all the more natural because of the number seven, which emphasized the contrast between these and the Pauline Epistles. St. Paul had written to seven particular Churches—Thessalonica, Corinth, Rome, Galatia, Philippi, Colossæ, and Ephesus; and here were seven Epistles without any address to a particular Church; therefore they might fitly be called "*General* Epistles." Clement of Alexandria uses this term of the letter addressed to the Gentile Christians "in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia" (Acts xv. 23) by the Apostles, in the so-called Council of Jerusalem (*Strom.* IV. xv.); and Origen uses it of the Epistle of Barnabas (*Con. Celsum* I. lxiii.), which is addressed simply to "sons and daughters," *i.e.* to Christians generally.

That this meaning was well understood, even after

[1] In the *Codex Sinaiticus* and some other authorities the Pauline Epistles are placed immediately after the Gospels, an arrangement which probably had its origin in the fact that for many early Christians these two groups constituted their New Testament. Among versions the Memphitic and the Thebaic have this order.

the misleading title "Canonical Epistles" had become usual in the West, is shown by the interesting Prologue to these Epistles written by the Venerable Bede, *c.* A.D. 712.[1] This prologue is headed, "Here begins the Prologue to the seven *Canonical* Epistles," and it opens thus: "James, Peter, John, and Jude published seven Epistles, to which ecclesiastical custom gives the name of *Catholic, i.e. universal.*"

The name is not strictly accurate, excepting in the cases of 1 John, 2 Peter, and Jude. It is admissible in a qualified sense of 1 Peter and James; but it is altogether inappropriate to 2 and 3 John, which are addressed, not to the Church at large, nor to a group of local Churches, but to individuals. But inasmuch as the common title of these letters was not the Epistles "to the Elect Lady" and "to Gaius," as in the case of the letters to Philemon, Titus, and Timothy, but simply the Second and Third of John, they were regarded as without address, and classed with the Catholic Epistles. And of course it was natural to put them into the same group with the First Epistle of St. John, although the name of the group did not suit them. At what date this arrangement was made is not certain; but there is reason for believing that these seven Epistles were already regarded as one collection in the third century, when Pamphilus, the friend of Eusebius, was making his famous library at Cæsarea. Euthalius (*c.* A.D. 450) published an edition of them, in making which he had collated "the accurate copies" in this library; and it is probable that he found the grouping already existing in those copies, and did not make it for himself.

[1] It is omitted by Giles and other editors, but is given by Cave, in his *Historia Literaria* (I., p. 475), who says that it comes from an ancient MS. in the Library of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge

Moreover, it is probable that the copies at Cæsarea were made by Pamphilus himself; for the summary of the contents of the Acts published under the name of Euthalius is a mere copy of the summary given by Pamphilus, and it became the usual practice to place the Catholic Epistles immediately after the Acts. If, then, Euthalius got the summary of the Acts from Pamphilus, he probably got the arrangement from him also, viz. the putting of these seven Epistles into one group, and placing them next to the Acts.[1]

The order which makes the Catholic Epistles follow immediately after the Acts is very ancient, and it is a matter for regret that the influence of Jerome, acting through the Vulgate, has universally disturbed it in all Western Churches. "The connexion between these two portions (the Acts and the Catholic Epistles), commended by its intrinsic appropriateness, is preserved in a large proportion of Greek MSS. of all ages, and corresponds to marked affinities of textual history."[2] It is the order followed by Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, John of Damascus, the Council of Laodicea, and also by Cassian. It has been restored by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort; but it is not to be expected that even their powerful authority will avail to re-establish the ancient arrangement.

The order of the books in the group of the Catholic Epistles is not quite constant; but almost always James stands first. In a very few authorities Peter stands first, an arrangement naturally preferred in the West, but not adopted even there, because the authority of the original order was too strong. A scholiast on the

[1] Westcott *On the Canon*, pp. 362, 417, 3rd Ed.

[2] Westcott and Hort, II., p. 321; Scrivener, *Introduction to the Criticism of the N. T.* pp. 70, 74, 3rd Ed.

Epistle of James states that this Epistle has been placed before 1 Peter, "because it is *more catholic* than that of Peter," by which he seems to mean that whereas 1 Peter is addressed "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion" in certain specified districts, the Epistle of James is addressed "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," without any limitation. The Venerable Bede, in the Prologue to the Catholic Epistles quoted above (p. 6), states that James is placed first, because he undertook to rule the Church of Jerusalem, which was the fount and source of that evangelic preaching which has spread throughout the world; or else because he sent his Epistle to the twelve tribes of Israel, who were the first to believe. And Bede calls attention to the fact that St. Paul himself adopts this order when he speaks of "James, and Cephas, and John, they who were reputed to be pillars" (Gal. ii. 9). It is possible, however, that the order James, Peter, John was meant to represent a belief as to the chronological precedence of James to Peter, and Peter to John; Jude being placed last because of its comparative insignificance, and because it was not at first universally admitted. The Syriac Version, which admits only James, 1 Peter, and 1 John, has the three in this order; and if the arrangement had its origin in reverence for the first Bishop of Jerusalem, it is strange that most of the Syriac copies should have a heading to the effect that these three Epistles of James, Peter, and John are by the three who witnessed the Transfiguration. Those who made and those who accepted this comment certainly had no idea of reverencing the first Bishop of Jerusalem, for it implies that the Epistle of James is by the son of Zebedee and brother of John, who was put to death by Herod. But it is probable

that this heading is a mere blundering conjecture. If persons who believed the Epistle to be written by James the brother of John had fixed the order, they would have fixed it thus—Peter, James, John, as in Matt. xvii. 1; Mark v. 37; ix. 2; xiii. 3; xiv. 33; comp. Matt. xxvi. 37; or Peter, John, James, as in Luke viii. 51; ix. 28; Acts i. 13. But the former arrangement would be more reasonable than the latter, seeing that John wrote so long after the other two. The traditional order harmonizes with two facts which were worth marking—(1) that two of the three were Apostles, and must therefore be placed together; (2) that John wrote last, and must therefore be placed last; but whether or no the wish to mark these facts determined the order, we have not sufficient knowledge to enable us to decide.

How enormous would have been the loss had the Catholic Epistles been excluded from the canon of the New Testament it is not difficult to see. Whole phases of Christian thought would have been missing. The Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul would have told us of their existence, but would not have shown to us what they were. We should have known that there were serious differences of opinion even among the Apostles themselves, but we should have had a very imperfect knowledge as to their nature and reconciliation. We might have guessed that those who had been with Jesus of Nazareth throughout His ministry would not preach Christ in the same way as St. Paul, who had never seen Him until after the Ascension, but we should not have been sure of this; still less could we have seen in what the difference would have consisted; and we should have known very little indeed of the distinctive marks of the three great teachers who

"were reputed to be pillars" of the Church. Above all, we should have known sadly little of the Mother Church of Jerusalem, and of the teaching of those many early Christians who, while heartily embracing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, believed that they were bound to hold fast not only to the morality, but to the discipline of Moses. Thus in many particulars we should have been left to conjecture as to how the continuity in the Divine Revelation was maintained; how the Gospel not merely superseded, but fulfilled, and glorified, and grew out of the Law.

All this has to a large extent been made plain to us by the providence of God in giving to us and preserving for us in the Church the seven Catholic Epistles. We see St. James and St. Jude presenting to us that Judaic form of Christianity which was really the complement, although when exaggerated it became the opposite, of the teaching of St. Paul. We see St. Peter mediating between the two, and preparing the way for a better comprehension of both. And then St. John lifts us up into a higher and clearer atmosphere, in which the controversy between Jew and Gentile has faded away into the dim distance, and the only opposition which remains worthy of a Christian's consideration is that between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, love and hate, God and the world, Christ and Antichrist, life and death.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

CHAPTER II.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."—Jas. i. 1.

THE question of the authenticity of this Epistle resolves itself into two parts—Is the Epistle the genuine product of a writer of the Apostolic age? if so, which of the persons of the Apostolic age who bore the name of James is the author of it? In answering the former of these two questions it is important to put it in the proper way. We have done a good deal towards the solution of a problem when we have learned to state it correctly; and the way in which we ought to approach the problem of the genuineness of this and other books of the New Testament is not, Why should we believe that these writings are what they profess to be? but, Why should we *refuse* to believe this? Have we any sufficient reason for reversing the decision of the fourth and fifth centuries, which possessed far more evidence on the question than has come down to us?

It must be remembered that that decision was not given mechanically or without consideration of doubts and difficulties; nor was it imposed by authority, until independent Churches and scholars had arrived at pretty much the same conclusion. And the decision, as soon

as it was pronounced, was unanimously accepted in both East and West—a fact which was ample guarantee that the decision was universally recognized as correct; for there was no central authority of sufficient influence to force a suspected decision upon mistrustful Churches. Eusebius, it is true, classes most of the Catholic Epistles among the "disputed" (*ἀντιλεγόμενα*) books of the New Testament, without, however, affirming that he shared the doubts which existed in some quarters respecting them. This fact, which is sometimes rather hastily taken as telling altogether against the writings which he marks as "disputed," really tells *both* ways. On the one hand, it shows that doubts had existed respecting some of the canonical books; and these doubts must have had some reason (whether valid or not) for existing. On the other hand, the fact that the authority of these books was sometimes disputed in the third century shows that the verdict formally given and ratified at the Council of Laodicea (*c.* 364)[1] was given after due examination of the adverse evidence, and with a conviction that the doubts which had been raised were not justified; and the universal welcome which was accorded to the verdict throughout Christendom shows that the doubts which had been raised had ceased to exist. If, then, on the one hand we remember that misgivings once existed, and argue that these misgivings must have had some basis, on the other we must remember that these misgivings were entirely abandoned, and that there must have been reason for abandoning them. What reason, then, have we

[1] The date so frequently given, A.D. 363, cannot be substantiated, and on the whole is not probable. See Hefele, *History of the Church Councils*, II. vi. 93.

for disturbing the verdict of the fourth century, and reviving misgivings long ago put to rest?

Of course those who gave that verdict and those who ratified it were fallible persons, and no member of the English Church, at any rate, would argue that the question is closed and may not be reopened. But the point to be insisted upon is that the *onus probandi* rests with those who assail or suspect these books, rather than with those who accept them. It is not the books that ought, on demand, again and again to be placed on their trial, but the pleas of those who would once more bring them into court that ought to be sifted. These objectors deserve a hearing; but while they receive it, we have full right to stand by the decision of the fourth century, and refuse to part with, or even seriously to suspect, any of the precious inheritance which has been handed down to us. It may be confidently asserted that thus far no strong case has been made out against any of the five "disputed" Epistles, excepting 2 Peter; and with regard to that it is still true to affirm that the Petrine authorship remains, on the whole, a reasonable "working hypothesis."

Do not let us forget what the epithet "disputed," applied to these and one or two[1] other books of the New Testament, really means. It does *not* mean that at the beginning of the fourth century Eusebius found that these writings were *universally regarded with suspicion; that is a gross exaggeration of the import of the term.* Rather it means that these books were *not universally accepted;* that although they were, as a rule, regarded as canonical, and as part of the contents of the New Testament (ἐνδιάθηκοι γραφαί), yet in some

[1] The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse.

quarters their authority was doubted or denied. And the reasons for these doubts were naturally not in all cases the same. With regard to 2 Peter, the doubt must have been as to its genuineness and authenticity. It claimed to be written by "Simon Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ" and a witness of the Transfiguration (2 Peter i. 1, 18); but the obscurity of its origin and other circumstances were against it. With regard to James, Jude, and 2 and 3 John the doubt was rather as to their Apostolicity. They did not claim to be written by Apostles. There was no reason for doubting the antiquity or the genuineness of these four books; but granting that they were written by the persons whose name they bore, were these persons Apostles? And if they were not, what was the authority of their writings? The doubts with regard to the Revelation and to the Epistle to the Hebrews were in part of the same character. Were they in the full sense of the term Apostolic, as having been written by Apostles, or at least under the guidance of Apostles? Eusebius says expressly that all these "disputed" books were "nevertheless *well known to most* people."[1]

And it is manifest that the doubts which Eusebius records were ceasing to exist. Only in some cases does he indicate, and that without open statement, that he himself was at all inclined to sympathize with them. And Athanasius, writing a very short time afterwards (A.D. 326), makes no distinction between acknowledged and disputed books, but places all seven of the Catholic Epistles, as of equal authority, immediately after the

[1] γνωρίμων δ' οὖν ὅμως τοῖς πολλοῖς (*H. E.* III. xxv. 3), where γνώριμος, as usual, indicates *familiar* knowledge. Eusebius is a desultory writer, and one has to gather his views from statements scattered

Acts of the Apostles.[1] Cyril of Jerusalem, in his Catechetical Lectures, written before his episcopate, *c.* A.D. 349, does the same (*Lect.* IV. x. 36). Some fifteen years later we have the Council of Laodicea, and near the end of the century the Council of Hippo, and the third Council of Carthage, giving formal ratification to these generally received views; after which all questioning for many centuries ceased. So that while the classification into "acknowledged" and "disputed" writings proves that each book was carefully scrutinized, and in various quarters independently, before it was admitted to the canon, the cessation of this distinction proves that the result of all this scrutiny was

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over chaps. iii., xxiv., and xxv., some of which are not very precise. The following table seems to represent his opinion:—

- Canonical Books (ἐνδιάθηκοι γραφαί).
  - *Universally acknowledged* (τὰ ὁμολογούμενα): Four Gospels, Acts, fourteen Epistles of Paul (Hebrews ?), 1 John, 1 Peter, Apocalypse (?).
  - *Disputed* (τὰ ἀντιλεγόμενα)
    - *As to authenticity*—2 Peter.
    - *As to Apostolicity*—James, Jude, 2 and 3 John.
- Uncanonical.
  - *Orthodox*, but of no authority, because *defective*
    - *As to authenticity*—Acts of Paul, Shepherd, Apocalypse of Peter.
    - *As to Apostolicity*—Epistle of Barnabas, Doctrines of the Apostles, Gospel according to Hebrews, Apocalypse (?).
  - *Heretical*: Gospels of Peter, Thomas, Matthias, Acts of Andrew, John, etc., etc.

[1] *Epist. Fest.* xxxix. The passage is given in full by Westcott *On the Canon*, Appendix D., xiv. The *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius cannot have been completed later than A. D. 325, but the earlier books were probably written about A.D. 313, soon after the Edict of Milan. See Bishop Lightfoot, *Dict. of Chris. Biog.*, I., p. 322.

that the sporadic doubts and hesitations respecting certain of the books of the New Testament were finally put to rest.

And it must not be supposed that the process was one of general amnesty. While some books that had here and there been excluded were finally accepted, some that had here and there been included in the canon, such as the Epistles of Clement and of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas, were finally rejected. The charge of uncritical or indiscriminate admission cannot be substantiated. The facts are quite the other way.

When we confine our attention to the Epistle of James in particular, we find that if the doubts which were here and there felt respecting it in the third century are intelligible, the universal acceptance which it met with in the fourth and following centuries is well founded. The doubts were provoked by two facts—(1) the Epistle had remained for some time unknown to a good many Churches; (2) when it became generally known it remained uncertain what the authority of the writer was, especially whether he was an Apostle or not. It is possible also that these misgivings were in some cases emphasized by the further fact that there is a marked absence of doctrinal teaching. In this Epistle the articles of the Christian faith are scarcely touched upon at all. Whether the apparent inconsistency with the teaching of St. Paul respecting the relation between faith and works, of which so much has been made since Luther's time, was discovered or not by those who were inclined to dispute the authority of this Epistle, may be doubted. But of course, if any inconsistency *was* believed to exist, that also would tell against the general reception of the letter as canonical.

That the Epistle should at first remain very little known, especially in the West and among the Gentile congregations, is exactly what we should expect from the character of the letter and the circumstances of its publication. It is addressed by a Jew to Jews, by one who never moved from the Church over which he presided at Jerusalem to those humble and obscure Christians outside Palestine who, by their conscientious retention of the Law side by side with the Gospel, cut themselves off more and more from free intercourse with other Christians, whether Gentile converts or more liberally-minded Jews. A letter which in the first instance was to be read in Christian *synagogues* (James ii. 2) might easily remain a long time without becoming known to Churches which from the outset had adopted the principles laid down in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. The constant journeys of the Apostle or the Gentiles caused his letters to become well known throughout the Churches at a very early date. But the first Bishop of the Mother Church of Jerusalem had no such advantages. Great as was his influence in his own sphere, with a rank equal to that of an Apostle, yet he was not well known outside that sphere, and he himself seems never to have travelled beyond it, or even to have left the centre of it. With outsiders, who simply knew that he was not one of the Twelve, his influence would not be great; and a letter emanating from him, even if known to exist, would not be eagerly inquired after or carefully circulated. Gentile prejudice against Jewish Christians would still further contribute to keep in the background a letter which was specially addressed to Jewish Christians, and was also itself distinctly Jewish in tone. Nor would the exclusive class of believers to whom the

letter was sent care to make it known to those Christians from whom they habitually kept aloof. Thus the prejudices of both sides contributed to prevent the Epistle from circulating outside the somewhat narrow circle to which it was in the first instance addressed; and there is therefore nothing surprising in its being unknown to Irenæus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and the author of the Muratorian Canon. There is no sign that these writers *rejected* it; they had never heard of it.[1]

And yet the Epistle did become known at a very early date, at any rate to some outsiders, even in the West. It was almost certainly known to Clement of Rome, whose Epistle to the Church of Corinth (written *c.* A.D. 97) contains several passages, which seem to be reminiscences of St. James. And although not one of them can be relied upon as proving that Clement knew our Epistle, yet when they are all put together they make a cumulative argument of very great strength.[2] So cautious and critical a writer as Bishop Lightfoot does not hesitate to assert, in a note on Clement, chap. xii., "The instance of Rahab was doubtless suggested by Heb. xi. 31; James ii. 25; for *both these Epistles were known to St. Clement, and are quoted elsewhere.*" And the Epistle of St. James was certainly known to Hermas, a younger contemporary of Clement, and

[1] Harnack, *Das Neue Testament um das Jahr* 200 (Freiburg I. B., 1889), p. 79.

[2] Compare Clement x. 1 with James ii. 23.
" " xi. 2 " " i. 8; iv. 8.
" " xii. 1 " " ii. 25.
" " xvii. 6 " " iv. 14.
" " xxx. 2 " " iv. 6.
" " xxxi. 2 " " ii. 21.
" " xlvi. 5 " " iv. 1.
" " xlix. 5 " " x. 20.

author of the *Shepherd*, which was written in the first half, and possibly in the first quarter, of the second century.[1] Origen, in the works of which we have the Greek original, quotes it once as "the Epistle current as that of James" (τῇ φερομένῃ Ἰακώβου ἐπιστολῇ—*In Johan.* xix. 6), and once (*In Psal.* xxx.) without any expression of doubt; and in the inaccurate Latin translations of others of his works there are several distinct quotations from the Epistle. So that it would seem to have reached Alexandria just as Clement, Origen's instructor and predecessor, left the city during the persecution under Septimius Severus (*c.* A.D. 202).[2]

But the conclusive fact in the external evidence respecting the Epistle is that it is contained in the Peshitto. This ancient Syriac Version was made in the second century, in the country in which the letter of James would be best known; and although the framers of this translation omitted 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude, they admitted James without scruple. Thus the earliest evidence for this Epistle, as for that to the Hebrews, is chiefly Eastern; while that for Jude, as for 2 and 3 John, is chiefly Western.

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[1] Salmon, *Introduction to the N. T.*, pp. 52, 582-91, 4th Ed. (Murray, 1889); Zahn, *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Erlangen, 1889), p. 962.

[2] If Zahn is right in thinking that Clement knew, and perhaps commented on, the Epistle of James, it may have become known in Alexandria somewhat earlier. A few passages in Clement have possible reminiscences of James; *e.g.* in *Strom.* II. v. he says of Abraham that he is found to have been expressly called the "friend" of God (James ii. 23); and in *Strom.* VI. xviii., in connexion with loving one's neighbour (the βασιλικὸς νόμος of James ii. 8), he speaks of being βασιλικοί (Zahn, *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons*, I., pp. 322, 323—Erlangen, 1888). The *Hypotyposeis*, in which Clement perhaps treated of the Catholic Epistles, were written after he left Alexandria (*Ibid.*, p. 29).

And the evidence of the Peshitto is not weakened by the fact, if it be a fact, that there was a still earlier Syrian canon which contained none of the Catholic Epistles. There is no certain allusion to them or quotation from them in the Homilies of Aphrahat or Aphraates (*c.* A.D. 335); and in the "Doctrine of Addai" (A.D. 250-300) the clergy of Edessa are directed to read the Law and the Prophets, the Gospel, St. Paul's Epistles, and the Acts, no other canonical book being mentioned. In all Churches the number of Christian writings read publicly in the liturgy was at first small, and in no case were the Catholic Epistles the first to be used for this purpose.

The internal evidence, as we shall see when we come to examine it more closely, is even more strong than the external. The character of the letter exactly harmonizes with the character of James the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and with the known circumstances of those to whom the letter is addressed, and this in a way that no literary forger of that age could have reached. And there is no sufficient motive for a forgery, for the letter is singularly wanting in doctrinal statements. The supposed opposition to St. Paul will not hold; a writer who wished to oppose St. Paul would have made his opposition much more clear. And a forger who wished to get the authority of St. James wherewith to counteract St. Paul's teaching would have made us aware that it was either an Apostle, the son of Zebedee or the son of Alphæus, or else the brother of the Lord, who was addressing us, and would not have left it open for us to suppose that the Epistle was from the pen of some unknown James, who had no authority at all equal to that of St. Paul. And let any one compare this Epistle with those of

Clement of Rome, and of Barnabas, and of Ignatius, and mark its enormous superiority. If it were the work of a forger, what a perplexing fact this superiority would be! If it be the work either of an Apostle or of one who had Apostolic rank, everything is explained.

Luther's famous criticism on the Epistle, that it is "a veritable Epistle of straw," is amazing, and is to be explained by the fact that it contradicts his caricature of St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. There is no opposition between St. James and St. Paul, and there is sometimes no real opposition between St. James and Luther (see p. 147). And when Luther gives as his opinion that our Epistle was "not the writing of any Apostle" we can agree with him, though not in the sense in which he means it; for he starts from the erroneous supposition that the letter bears the name of the son of Zebedee. We must also bear in mind his own explanation of what is Apostolic and what is not. It has a purely subjective meaning. It does not mean what was written or not written by an Apostle or the equal of an Apostle. "Apostolic" means that which, in Luther's opinion, an Apostle *ought* to teach, and all that fails to satisfy this condition is not Apostolic. "Therein all true holy books agree, that they preach and urge Christ. That too is the right touchstone whereby to test all books—whether they urge Christ or not; for all Scripture testifies of Christ (Rom. iii. 21). . . . That which does not teach Christ is still short of Apostolic, even if it were the teaching of St. Peter or St. Paul. Again, that which preaches Christ, that were Apostolic, even if Judas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod preached it." The Lutheran Church has not followed him in this principle, which places the authority of any book of Scripture at the mercy of the likes and dislikes

of the individual reader; and it has restored the Epistles to the Hebrews and of James and Jude to their proper places in the New Testament, instead of leaving them in the kind of appendix to which Luther had banished them and the Revelation. Moreover, the passage containing the statement about the "veritable Epistle of straw"[1] is now omitted from the preface to his translation. And with regard to this very point, his former friend and later opponent Andrew Rudolph Bodenstein, of Karlstadt, pertinently asked, "If you allow the Jews to stamp books with authority by receiving them, why do you refuse to grant as much power to the Churches of Christ, since the Church is not less than the Synagogue?" We have at least as much reason to trust the Councils of Laodicea, Hippo, and Carthage, which formally defined the limits of the New Testament, as we have to trust the unknown Jewish influences which fixed those of the Old. And when we examine for ourselves the evidence which is still extant, and which has greatly diminished in the course of fifteen hundred years, we feel that both on external and internal grounds the decision of the fourth century respecting the genuineness of the Epistle of St. James, as a veritable product of the Apostolic age and as worthy of a place in the canon of the New Testament, is fully justified.

[1] Or, more literally, "a right strawy Epistle"—"eine rechte strohern Epistel. . . . Denn sie doch keine evangelische Art an sich hat" (*Luther's Werke*, ed. Gustav Pfizer, Frankfurt, 1840, p. 1412; see also pp. 1423, 1424, and Westcott *On the Canon*, 3rd ed., pp. 448-54).

CHAPTER III.

THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE: JAMES THE BROTHER OF THE LORD.

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."—Jas. i. 1.

WE have still to consider the second half of the question as to the authenticity of this letter. Granting that it is a genuine Epistle of James, and a writing of the Apostolic age, to which of the persons in that age who are known to us as bearing the name of James is it to be attributed? The consensus of opinion on this point, though not so great as that respecting the genuineness of the letter, is now very considerable, and seems to be increasing.

The name James is the English form of the Hebrew name Yacoob (Jacob), which in Greek became *Ἰάκωβος*, in Latin Jacōbus, and in English James, a form which grievously blurs the history of the name. From having been the name of the patriarch Jacob, the progenitor of the Jewish race, it became one of the commonest of proper names among the Jews; and in the New Testament we find several persons bearing this name among the followers of Jesus Christ. It would be possible to make as many as six; but these must certainly be reduced to four, and probably to three.

These six are—

1. James the Apostle, the son of Zebedee and brother

of John the Apostle (Matt. iv. 21; x. 2; xvii. 5; Mark x. 35; xiii. 3; Luke ix. 54; Acts xii. 2).

2. James the Apostle, the son of Alphæus (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13).

3. James the Little, the son of Mary the wife of Clōpas (John xix. 25), who had one other son, named Joses (Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40).

4. James the brother of the Lord (Gal. i. 19), a relationship which he shares with Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3) and some unnamed sisters.

5. James the overseer of the Church of Jerusalem (Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 7; Gal. ii. 9, 12).

6. James the brother of the Jude who wrote the Epistle (Jude i. 1).

Besides which, we have an unknown James, who was father of the Apostle Judas, not Iscariot (Luke v. 16); but we do not know that this James ever became a disciple.

Of these six we may safely identify the last three as being one and the same person; and we may probably identify James the Apostle, the son of Alphæus, with James the Little, the son of Mary and Clopas; in which case we may conjecture that the epithet of "the Little" (ὁ μικρός) was given him to distinguish him from the other Apostle James, the son of Zebedee. Clopas (not Cleophas, as in the A.V.) may be one Greek form of the Aramaic name Chalpai, of which Alphæus may be another Greek form; so that the father of this James may have been known both as Clopas and as Alphæus. But this is by no means certain. In the ancient Syriac Version we do not find both Alphæus and Clopas represented by Chalpai; but we find

Alphæus rendered Chalpai, while Clopas reappears as Kleopha. And the same usage is found in the Jerusalem Syriac.

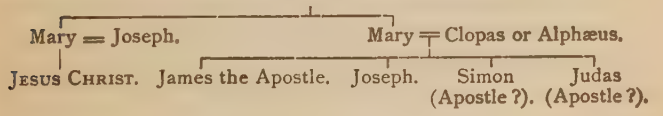
We have thus reduced the six to four or three; and it is sometimes proposed to reduce the three to two, by identifying James the Lord's brother with James the son of Alphæus. But this identification is attended by difficulties so serious as to seem to be quite fatal; and it would probably never have been made but for the wish to show that "brother of the Lord" does not mean brother in the literal sense, but may mean *cousin*. For the identification depends upon making Mary the wife of Clopas (and mother of James the son of Alphæus) identical with the sister of Mary the mother of the Lord, in the much-discussed passage John xix. 25; so that Jesus and James would be first cousins, being sons respectively of two sisters, each of whom was called Mary.[1]

The difficulties under which this theory labours are mainly these:—

1. It depends on an identification of Clopas with Alphæus, which is uncertain, though not improbable.

2. It depends on a further identification of Christ's "mother's sister" with "Mary the wife of Clopas" in John xix. 25, which is both uncertain and highly improbable. In that verse we almost certainly have four women, and not three, contrasted with the four soldiers just mentioned (vv. 23, 24), and arranged in

[1] The supposed relationship may be exhibited thus:—



two pairs: "His mother, and His mother's sister; Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene."

3. It assumes that two sisters were both called Mary.

4. No instance in Greek literature has been found in which "brother" (ἀδελφός) means "cousin." The Greek language has a word to express "cousin" (ἀνεψιός), which occurs Col. iv. 10; and it is to be noted that the ancient tradition preserved by Hegesippus (*c.* A.D. 170) distinguishes James the first overseer of the Church of Jerusalem as the "*brother* of the Lord" (Eus. *H. E.* II. xxiii. 1), and his successor Symeon as the "*cousin* of the Lord" (IV. xxii. 4). Could Hegesippus have written thus if James were really a cousin? If a vague term such as "kinsman" (συγγενής) was wanted, that also might have been used, as in Luke i. 36, 58; ii. 44.

5. In none of the four lists of the Apostles is there any hint that any of them are the brethren of the Lord; and in Acts i. 13, 14, and 1 Cor. ix. 5, "the brethren of the Lord" are expressly distinguished from the Apostles. Moreover, the traditions of the age subsequent to the New Testament sometimes make James the Lord's brother one of the Seventy, but never one of the Twelve, a fact which can be explained only on the hypothesis that it was notorious that he was not one of the Twelve. The reverence for this James and for the title of Apostle was such that tradition would eagerly have given him the title had there been any opening for doing so.

6. The "brethren of the Lord" appear in the Gospels almost always with the mother of the Lord (Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 32; Luke viii. 19; John ii. 12); never with Mary the wife of Clopas; and popular

knowledge of them connects them with Christ's mother, and not with any other Mary (Mark vi. 3; Matt. xiii. 55). "My brethren," in Matt. xxviii. 10, and John xx. 17, does not mean Christ's earthly relations, but the children of "My Father and your Father."

7. But the strongest objection of all is St. John's express statement (vii. 5) that "even His brethren did not believe on Him;" a statement which he could not have made if one of the brethren (James), and possibly two others (Simon and Judas), were already Apostles.

The identification of James the son of Alphæus with James the Lord's brother must therefore be abandoned, and we remain with three disciples bearing the name of James from which to select the writer of this Epistle —the son of Zebedee, the son of Alphæus, and the brother of the Lord. The father of Judas, not Iscariot, need not be considered, for we do not even know that he ever became a believer.

In our ignorance of the life, and thought, and language of the son of Zebedee and the son of Alphæus, we cannot say that there is anything in the Epistle itself which forbids us to attribute it to either of them; but there is nothing in it which leads us to do so. And there are two considerations which, when combined, are strongly against Apostolic authorship. The writer does not claim to be an Apostle; and the hesitation as to the reception of the Epistle in certain parts of the Christian Church would be extraordinary if the letter were reputed to be of Apostolic authorship. When we take either of these Apostles separately we become involved in further difficulties. It is not probable that any Apostolic literature existed in the lifetime of James the son of Zebedee, who was martyred, under Herod Agrippa I., *i.e.* not later than the spring

of A.D. 44, when Herod Agrippa died. That any Apostle wrote an encyclical letter as early as A.D. 42 or 43 is so improbable that we ought to have strong evidence before adopting it, and the only evidence worth considering is that furnished by the Peshitto. The earliest MSS. of this ancient Syriac Version, which date from the fifth to the eighth century, call it an Epistle of James the Apostle; but evidence which cannot be traced higher than the fifth century respecting an improbable occurrence alleged to have taken place in the first century is not worth very much. Moreover, the scribes who put this heading and subscription to the Epistle may have meant no more than that it was by a person of Apostolic rank, or they may have shared the common Western error of identifying the brother of the Lord with the son of Alphæus. Editors of the Syriac Version in a much later age certainly do attribute the Epistle to the son of Zebedee, for they state that the three Catholic Epistles admitted to that version —James, 1 Peter, and 1 John—are by the three Apostles who witnessed the Transfiguration. The statement seems to be a blundering misinterpretation of the earlier title, which assigned it to James the Apostle. And if we attribute the letter to the son of Alphæus we get rid of one difficulty, only to fall into another; we are no longer compelled to give the Epistle so improbably early a date as A.D. 43, but we are left absolutely without any evidence to connect it with the son of Alphæus, *unless* we identify this Apostle with the brother of the Lord, an identification which has already been shown to be untenable.[1]

[1] It seems to be right to take this opportunity of preventing a name of great authority from being any longer quoted as favouring the identification. Dr. Döllinger, in his *Christenthum und Kirche in*

Therefore, without further hesitation, we may assign the Epistle to one of the most striking and impressive figures in the Apostolic age, James the Just, the brother of the Lord, and the first overseer of the Mother Church of Jerusalem.

Whether James was the brother of the Lord as being the son of Joseph by a former marriage, or as being the son of Joseph and Mary born after the birth of Jesus, need not be argued in detail. All that specially concerns us, for a right understanding of the Epistle, is to remember that it was written by one who, although for some time not a believer in the Messiahship of Jesus, was, through his near relationship, constantly in His society, witnessing His acts and hearing His words. This much, however, should be noted, that there is nothing in Scripture to warn us from understanding that Joseph and Mary had other children and that "*first*born" in Luke ii. 7, and "till" in Matt. i. 25, appear to imply that they had; a supposition

der Zeit der Grundlegung (1860), translated by H. N. Oxenham as *The First Age of Christianity and the Church*, advocated the identification (chap. iii.). The venerable author told the present writer, in June, 1877, that he was convinced that his earlier opinion on this subject was entirely erroneous, and that the Apostle James of Alphæus was a different person from James Bishop of Jerusalem and brother of the Lord. He added that the Eastern Church had always distinguished the two, and that their identification in the West was due to the influence of Jerome.

The evidence of Martyrologies and Calendars is worth noting as indicating the tradition on the subject. The Hieronymian Martyrology and other early Roman Martyrologies commemorate James of Alphæus June 22nd, and James the Lord's brother December 27th; the Ambrosian Liturgy, James of Alphæus December 30th, and the Lord's brother May 1st; the Byzantine Calendar, James of Alphæus October 9th, and the Lord's brother October 23rd; the Egyptian and Ethiopic Calendars, James of Alphæus October 2nd, and the Lord's brother October 23rd.

confirmed by contemporary belief (Mark vi. 3; Matt. xiii. 55), and by the constant attendance of these "brethren" on the mother of the Lord (Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 32; Luke viii. 19; John ii. 12); that, on the other hand, the theory which gives Joseph children older than Jesus deprives Him of His rights as the heir of Joseph and of the house of David; seems to be of apocryphal origin (Gospel according to Peter, or Book of James); and like Jerome's theory of cousinship, appears to have been invented in the interests of ascetic views and of *à priori* convictions as to the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin. The immense consensus of belief in the perpetual virginity does not begin until long after all historical evidence was lost. Tertullian appears to assume as a matter of course that the Lord's brethren are the children of Joseph and Mary, as if in his day no one had any other view (*Adv. Marc.*, IV. xix.; *De Carne Christi*, vii.).[1]

According to either view, James was the son of Joseph, and almost certainly was brought up with his Divine Brother in the humble home at Nazareth. His father, as St. Matthew tells us (i. 19) was a *just* or *righteous* man, like the parents of the Baptist (Luke i. 6), and this was the title by which James was known during his lifetime, and by which he is still constantly known. He is James "the Just" (ὁ δίκαιος). The epithet as used in Scripture of his father and others (Matt. i. 19; xxiii. 35; Luke i. 6; ii. 25; xxiii. 50; Acts x. 20; 2 Peter ii. 7), and in history of him, must not be understood as implying precisely what the Athenians meant

[1] Alford, Farrar, Meyer, Schaff, Stier, Weiss, Wieseler, Winer, and others support this view. See also McClellan's note on Matt. xiii. 55, and Plumptre's Introduction to St. James. Bishop Lightfoot contends for the Epiphanian theory.

when they styled Aristeides "the Just," or what we mean by being "just" now. To a Jew the word implied not merely being impartial and upright, but also having a studied and even scrupulous reverence for everything prescribed by the Law. The Sabbath, the synagogue worship, the feasts and fasts, purification, tithes, all the moral and ceremonial ordinances of the Law of the Lord—these were the things on which the just man bestowed a loving care, and in which he preferred to do more than was required, rather than the bare minimum insisted on by the Rabbis. It was in a home of which righteousness of this kind was the characteristic that St. James was reared, and in which he became imbued with that reverent love for the Law which makes him, even more than St. Paul, to be the ideal "Hebrew of Hebrews." For him Christ came "not to destroy, but to fulfil." Christianity turns the Law of Moses into a "royal law" (ii. 8), but it does not abrogate it. The Judaism which had been his moral and spiritual atmosphere during his youth and early manhood remained with him after he had learned to see that there was no antagonism between the Law and the Gospel.

It would be part of his strict Jewish training that he should pay the prescribed visits to Jerusalem at the feasts (John vii. 10); and he would there become familiar with the magnificent liturgy of the Temple, and would lay the foundation for that love of public and private prayer within its precincts which was one of his best-known characteristics in after-life. A love of prayer, and a profound belief in its efficacy, appear again and again in the pages of his Epistle (i. 5; iv. 2, 3, 8; v. 13-18). It was out of a strong personal experience that the man who knelt in prayer until "his

knees became hard like a camel's" declared that "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working."

Strict Judaism has ever a tendency to narrowness, and we find this tendency in the brethren of the Lord, in their attitude both towards their Brother, and also towards Gentile converts after they had accepted Him (Gal. ii. 12). Of the long period of silence during which Jesus was preparing Himself for His ministry we know nothing. But immediately after His first miracle, which they probably witnessed, they went down with Him, and His mother, and His disciples to Capernaum (John ii. 12), and very possibly accompanied Him to Jerusalem for the Passover. They would be almost certain to go thither to keep the feast. It was there that "many believed on His Name, beholding His signs which He did. But Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, for that He knew all men." He knew that when the immediate effect of His miracles had passed off the faith of these sudden converts would not endure. And this seems to have been the case with His brethren. They were at first attracted by His originality, and power, and holiness, then perplexed by methods which they could not understand (John vii. 3, 4), then inclined to regard Him as a dreamer and a fanatic (Mark iii. 21), and finally decided against Him (John vii. 5). Like many others among His followers, they were quite unable to reconcile His position with the traditional views respecting the Messiah; and instead of revising these views, as being possibly faulty, they held fast to them, and rejected Him. It was not merely in reference to the people of Nazareth, who had tried to kill Him (Luke iv. 29), but to those who were still closer to Him by ties of blood

and home, that He uttered the sad complaint, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among *his own kin*, and in *his own house*" (Mark vi. 4).

The fact that our Lord committed His mother to the keeping of St. John harmonizes with the supposition that at the time of the Crucifixion His brethren were still unbelievers. The Resurrection would be likely to open their eyes and dispel their doubts (Acts i. 14); and a special revelation of the risen Lord seems to have been granted to St. James (1 Cor. xv. 7), as to St. Paul; in both cases because behind the external opposition to Christ there was earnest faith and devotion, which at once found its object, as soon as the obstructing darkness was removed. After his conversion, St. James speedily took the first place among the believers who constituted the original Church of Jerusalem. He takes the lead, even when the chief of the Apostles are present. It is to him that St. Peter reports himself, when he is miraculously freed from prison (Acts xii. 17). It is he who presides at the so-called Council of Jerusalem (xv. 13; see esp. ver. 19). And it is to him that St. Paul specially turns on his last visit to Jerusalem, to report his success among the Gentiles (xxi. 17). St. Paul places him before St. Peter and St. John in mentioning those "who were reputed to be pillars" of the Church (Gal. ii. 9), and states that on his first visit to Jerusalem after his own conversion he stayed fifteen days with Peter, but saw no other of the Apostles, excepting James, the Lord's brother (Gal. i. 18, 19); a passage of disputed meaning, but which, if it does not imply that James was in some sense an Apostle, at least suggests that he was a person of equal importance. (Comp. Acts ix. 26-30.) Moreover, we

find that at Antioch St. Peter himself allowed his attitude towards the Gentiles to be changed in deference to the representations of "certain that came from James," who had possibly misunderstood or misused their commission; but the narrowness already alluded to may have made St. James himself unable to move as rapidly as St. Peter and St. Paul in adopting a generous course with Gentile converts.

Unless there is a reference to St. James in Heb. xiii. 7, as among those who had once "had the lead over you," but are now no longer alive to speak the word, we must go outside the New Testament for further notices of him. They are to be found chiefly in Clement of Alexandria, Hegesippus, and Josephus. Clement (*Hypotyp.* VI. ap. Eus. *H. E.* II. i. 3) records a tradition that Peter, James, and John, after the Ascension of the Saviour, although they had been preferred by the Lord, did not contend for distinction, but that James the Just became Bishop of Jerusalem. And again (*Hypotyp.* VII.), "To James the Just, John, and Peter, the Lord, after the Resurrection, imparted the gift of knowledge (*τὴν γνῶσιν*); these imparted it to the rest of the Apostles, and the rest of the Apostles to the Seventy, of whom Barnabas was one. Now, there have been two Jameses—one the Just, who was thrown from the gable [of the Temple], and beaten to death by a fuller with a club, and another who was beheaded."[1] The narrative of Hegesippus is also preserved for us by Eusebius (*H. E.* II. xxiii. 4-18). It is manifestly legendary, and possibly comes from the Essene Ebionites, who appear to have been fond of

[1] Comp. *Strom.* VI. viii., where Clement speaks of James, Peter, John, Paul (note the order) as possessing the true *gnosis*, and knowing all things.

religious romances. It is sometimes accepted as historical, as by Clement in the passage just quoted; but its internal improbabilities and its divergencies from Josephus condemn it. It may, however, contain some historical touches, especially in the general sketch of St. James; just as the legends about our own King Alfred, although untrustworthy as to facts, nevertheless convey a true idea of the saintly and scholarly king. It runs thus: "There succeeds to the charge of the Church, James, the brother of the Lord, in conjunction with the Apostles, the one who has been named Just by all, from the time of our Lord to our own time, for there were many called James.[1] Now, he was holy from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor strong drink; nor did he eat animal food. No razor ever came upon his head; he anointed not himself with oil; and he did not indulge in bathing. To him alone was it lawful to go into the Holy Place[2]; for he wore no wool, but linen. And he would go into the Temple alone, and would be found there kneeling on his knees and asking forgiveness for the people, so that his knees became dry and hard as a camel's, because he was always on his knees worshipping God and asking forgiveness for the people. On account, therefore, of his exceeding justness, he was called Just and Oblias, which is in Greek 'bulwark of the people' and 'justness,' as the prophets show concerning him. Some, then, of the seven sects among the people, which have been mentioned before by me in the *Memoirs*, asked him, What is the Door of Jesus? And he said that

[1] Hegesippus evidently distinguishes James the brother of the Lord from any of the Twelve.

[2] It is incredible that he should be allowed the privileges of the high priest.

He was the Saviour. From which some believed Jesus is the Christ. But the sects aforesaid did not believe, either in the Resurrection or in One coming to recompense to each man according to his works. But as many as believed did so through James. When many, therefore, even of the rulers were believing, there was a tumult of the Jews and scribes and Pharisees, who said, It looks as if all the people would be expecting Jesus as the Christ. They came together, therefore, and said to James, We pray thee, restrain the people, for it has been led astray after Jesus, as though He were the Christ. We pray thee to persuade all that come to the day of the Passover concerning Jesus; for to thee we all give heed. For we bear witness to thee, and so do all the people, that thou art just, and acceptest not the person of any. Do thou, therefore, persuade the multitude not to be led astray concerning Jesus; for all the people and all of us give heed to thee. Stand, therefore, upon the gable of the Temple, that thou mayest be visible to those below, and that thy words may be readily heard by all the people. For on account of the Passover there have come together all the tribes, with the Gentiles also. Therefore the aforesaid scribes and Pharisees placed James upon the gable of the Temple, and cried to him and said, O just one, to whom we ought all to give heed, seeing that the people is being led astray after Jesus, who was crucified, tell us what is the Door of Jesus. And he answered with a loud voice, Why ask ye me concerning Jesus the Son of man? Even He sitteth in heaven, at the right of the Mighty Power, and He is to come on the clouds of heaven. And when many were convinced, and gave glory on the witness of James, and said, Hosannah to the Son of David, then again the

same scribes and Pharisees said unto one another, We have done ill in furnishing such witness to Jesus. But let us go up, and cast him down, that they may be terrified, and not believe him. And they cried out, saying, Oh! oh! even the Just has been led astray. And they fulfilled the Scripture, which is written in Isaiah, Let us take away the Just One, for he is troublesome to us; therefore shall they eat the fruit of their deeds. So they went up, and cast down the Just, and said to one another, Let us stone James the Just. And they began to stone him, seeing that he was not dead from the fall, but turning round, knelt, and said, I pray Thee, Lord God and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. But whilst they were thus stoning him, one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, son of Rechabim,[1] to whom Jeremiah the prophet bears testimony, cried, saying, Stop! what are ye doing? The Just One is praying for you. And one of them, one of the fullers, took the club with which clothes are pressed, and brought it down on the head of the Just One. And in this way he bore witness. And they buried him on the spot by the Temple, and his monument still remains by the Temple. This man has become a true witness, to both Jews and Gentiles, that Jesus is the Christ. And straightway Vespasian lays siege to them." That is, Hegesippus regards the attack of the Romans as a speedy judgment on the Jews for the murder of James the Just, and consequently places it A.D. 69. This is probably several years too late. Josephus places it A.D. 62 or 63. His account is as follows:—

"Now, the younger Ananus, whom we stated to have

[1] What is the meaning of this tautology? And could a Rechabite, who was not a Jew, become a priest?

succeeded to the high-priesthood, was precipitate in temper and exceedingly audacious, and he followed the sect of the Sadducees, who are very harsh in judging offenders, beyond all other Jews, as we have already shown. Ananus, therefore, as being a person of this character, and thinking that he had a suitable opportunity, through Festus being dead, and Albinus still on his journey (to Judæa), assembles a Sanhedrin of judges; and he brought before it the brother of Jesus who was called Christ (his name was James) and some others, and delivered them to be stoned, on a charge of being transgressors of the law. But as many as seemed to be most equitable among those in the city, and scrupulous as to all that concerned the laws, were grievously affected by this; and they send to the king [Herod Agrippa II.], secretly praying him to order Ananus to act in such a way no more; for that not even his first action was lawfully done. And some of them go to meet Albinus on his journey from Alexandria, and inform him that Ananus had no authority to assemble a Sanhedrin without his leave. And Albinus, being convinced by what they said, wrote in anger to Ananus, threatening to punish him for this. And for this reason King Agrippa took away the high-priesthood from him after he had been in office three months, and conferred it upon Jesus the son of Damnæus" (*Ant.* XX. ix. 1).

This account by Josephus contains no improbabilities, and should be preferred to that of Hegesippus. It has been suspected of Christian interpolation, because of the reference to Jesus Christ, whom Josephus persistently ignores in his writings. But a Christian who took the trouble to garble the narrative at all would probably have done so to more purpose, both as re-

gards Jesus and James. In any case Hegesippus and Josephus agree in confirming the impression produced by the New Testament, that James the Just was a person held in the greatest respect by all in Jerusalem, whether Jews or Christians, and one who exercised great influence in the East over the whole Jewish race. We shall find that this fact harmonizes well with the phenomena of the Epistle, and it leads directly to the next question which calls upon us for discussion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERSONS ADDRESSED IN THE EPISTLE; THE JEWS OF THE DISPERSION.

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting."—JAMES i. i.

THESE words appear to be both simple and plain. At first sight there would seem to be not much room for any serious difference of opinion as to their meaning. The writer of the letter writes as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," *i.e.* as a Christian, "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," *i.e.* to the Jews who are living away from Palestine. Almost the only point which seems to be open to doubt is whether he addresses himself to all Jews, believing and unbelieving, or, as one might presume from his proclaiming himself at the outset to be a Christian, only to those of his fellow-countrymen who, like himself, have become "servants of the Lord Jesus Christ." And this is a question which cannot be determined without a careful examination of the contents of the Epistle.

And yet there has been very great difference of opinion as to the persons whom St. James had in his mind when he wrote these words. There is not only the triplet of opinions which easily grow out of the question just indicated, viz. that the letter is addressed

to *believing Jews* only, to *unbelieving Jews* only, and to *both*: there are also the views of those who hold that it is addressed to Jewish and Gentile Christians regarded *separately*, or to the same regarded *as one body*, or to *Jewish Christians primarily*, with references to Gentile Christians and unconverted Jews, or finally to *Gentile Christians primarily*, seeing that they, since the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, are the true sons of Abraham and the rightful inheritors of the privileges of the twelve tribes.

In such a Babel of interpretations it will clear the ground somewhat if we adopt once more[1] as a guiding principle the common-sense canon of interpretation laid down by Hooker (*Eccles. Pol.* V. lix. 2), that "where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst." A literal construction of the expression "the twelve tribes of the Dispersion" will not only stand, but make excellent sense. Had St. James meant to address all Christians, regarded in their position as exiles from their heavenly home, he would have found some much plainer way of expressing himself. There is nothing improbable, but something quite the reverse, in the supposition that the first overseer of the Church of Jerusalem, who, as we have seen, was "a Hebrew of Hebrews," wrote a letter to those of his fellow-countrymen who were far removed from personal intercourse with him. So devoted a Jew, so devout a Christian, as we know him to have been, could not but take the most intense interest in all who were of Jewish blood, wherever they might dwell, especially such as had learned to believe in Christ, above all when he knew that they were suffering from habitual oppression

[1] See *The Pastoral Epistles* in this series, pp. 285-6.

and ill-treatment. We may without hesitation decide that when St. James says "the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion" he means Jews away from their home in Palestine, and not Christians away from their home in heaven. For what possible point would the Dispersion (ἡ διασπορά) have in such a metaphor? Separation from the heavenly home might be spoken of as banishment, or exile, or homelessness, but not as "dispersion." Even if we confined ourselves to the opening words, we might safely adopt this conclusion, but we shall find that there are numerous features in the letter itself which abundantly confirm it.

It is quite out of place to quote such passages as the sealing of "the hundred and forty and four thousand . . . out of every tribe of the children of Israel" (Rev. vii. 4-8), or the city with "twelve gates, . . . and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Rev. xxi. 12). These occur in a book which is symbolical from the first chapter to the last, and therefore we know that the literal construction cannot stand. The question throughout is not whether a given passage is to be taken literally or symbolically, but what the passage in question symbolizes. Nor, again, can St. Peter's declaration that "ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet. ii. 9), be considered as at all parallel. There the combination of expressions plainly shows that the language is figurative; and there is no real analogy between an impassioned exhortation, modelled on the addresses of the Hebrew prophets, and the matter-of-fact opening words of a letter. The words have the clear ring of nationality, and there is nothing whatever added to them to turn the simple note into the complex sound of

a doubtful metaphor. As Davidson justly remarks, "The use of the phrase *twelve tribes* is inexplicable if the writer intended all believers without distinction. The author makes no allusion to Gentile converts, nor to the relation between Jew and Gentile incorporated into one spiritual body."

Let us look at some of the features which characterize the Epistle itself, and see whether they bear out the view which is here advocated, that the persons addressed are Israelites in the national sense, and not as having been admitted into the spiritual "Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16).

(1) The writer speaks of Abraham as "our father," without a hint that this is to be understood in any but the literal sense. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" (ii. 21). St. Paul, when he speaks of Abraham as "the father of all them that believe," clearly indicates this (Rom. iv. 11). (2) The writer speaks of his readers as worshipping in a "synagogue" (ii. 2), which may possibly mean that, just as St. James and the Apostles continued to attend the Temple services after the Ascension, so their readers are supposed to attend the synagogue services after their conversion. Bnt at least it shows that the writer, in speaking of the public worship of those whom he addresses, naturally uses a word (*συναγωγή*) which had then, and continues to have, specially Jewish associations, rather than one (*ἐκκλησία*) which from the first beginnings of Christianity was promoted from its old political sphere to indicate the congregations, and even the very being, of the Christian Church. (3) He assumes that his writers are familiar not only with the life of Abraham (ii. 21, 23), but of Rahab (25), the

prophets (v. 10), Job (11), and Elijah (17). These frequent appeals to the details of the Old Testament would be quite out of place in a letter addressed to Gentile converts. (4) God is spoken of under the specially Hebrew title of "the Lord of Sabaoth" (v. 4); and the frequent recurrence of "the Lord" throughout the Epistle (i. 7; iii. 9; iv. 10, 15; v. 10, 11, 15) looks like the language of one who wished to recall the name Jehovah to his readers. (5) In discountenancing swearing (v. 12) Jewish forms of oaths are taken as illustrations. (6) The vices which are condemned are such as were as common among the Jews as among the Gentiles—reckless language, rash swearing, oppression of the poor, covetousness. There is little or nothing said about the gross immorality which was rare among the Jews, but was almost a matter of course among the Gentiles. St. James denounces faults into which Jewish converts would be likely enough to lapse; he says nothing about the vices respecting which heathen converts, such as those at Corinth, are constantly warned by St. Paul. (7) But what is perhaps the most decisive feature of all is that he assumes throughout that for those whom he addresses the Mosaic Law is a binding and final authority. "If ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. . . . If thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (ii. 9-11). "He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law" (iv. 11).

Scarcely any of these seven points, taken singly, would be at all decisive; but when we sum them up together, remembering in how short a letter they occur, and when we add them to the very plain and simple language

of the address, we have an argument which will carry conviction to most persons who have no preconceived theory of their own to defend. And to this positive evidence derived from the presence of so much material that indicates Jewish circles as the destined recipients of the letter, we must add the strongly confirmatory negative evidence derived from the absence of anything which specially points either to Gentile converts or unconverted heathen. We may therefore read the letter as having been written by one who had been born and educated in a thoroughly Jewish atmosphere, who had accepted the Gospel, not as cancelling the Law, but as raising it to a higher power; and we may read it also as addressed to men who, like the writer, are by birth and education Jews, and, like him, have acknowledged Jesus as their Lord and the Christ. The difference between writer and readers lies in this, that he is in Palestine, and they not; that he appears to be in a position of authority, whereas they seem for the most part to be a humble and suffering folk. All which fits in admirably with the hypothesis that we have before us an Epistle written by the austere and Judaic-minded James the Just, written from Jerusalem, to comfort and warn those Jewish Christians who lay remote from his personal influence.

That it is Jewish *Christians*, and not unbelieving Jews, or Jews whether believing or not, who are addressed, is not open to serious doubt. There is not only the fact that St. James at the outset proclaims himself to be a Christian (i. 1), but also the statement that the wealthy oppressors of his poor readers "blaspheme the honourable Name by which ye are called," or more literally "which was called upon you," viz. the Name of Christ. Again, the famous

paragraph about faith and works assumes that the faith of the readers and the faith of the writer is identical (ii. 7, 14-20). Once more, he expressly claims them as believers when he writes, "My brethren, hold not *the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons" (ii. 1). And if more be required, we have it in the concluding exhortations: "Be patient, therefore, brethren, *until the coming of the Lord*. . . . Stablish your hearts: for *the coming of the Lord* is at hand" (v. 7, 8).

Whether or no there are passages which glance aside at unbelieving Jews, and perhaps even some which are directly addressed to them, cannot be decided with so much certainty; but the balance of probability appears to be on the affirmative side in both cases. There probably are places in which St. James is thinking of unbelieving Israelites, and one or more passages in which he turns aside and sternly rebukes them, much in the same way as the Old Testament prophets sometimes turn aside to upbraid Tyre and Sidon and the heathen generally. "Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats?" (ii. 6), seems to refer to rich unconverted Jews prosecuting their poor Christian brethren before the synagogue courts, just as St. Paul did when he was Saul the persecutor (Acts ix. 2). And "Do not they blaspheme the honourable Name by which *ye* are called?" can scarcely be said of Christians. If the blasphemers were Christians they would be said rather to blaspheme the honourable Name by which *they themselves* were called. *There* would lie the enormity—that the name of Jesus Christ had been "called upon them," and yet they blasphemed it. And when we come to look at the matter in detail we shall find reason for believing that the

stern words at the beginning of chapter v. are addressed to unbelieving Jews. There is not one word of Christian, or even moral, exhortation in it; it consists entirely of accusation and threatening, and in this respect is in marked contrast to the equally stern words at the beginning of chapter iv., which are addressed to worldly and godless Christians.

To suppose that the rich oppressors so often alluded to in the Epistle are *heathen*, as Hilgenfeld does, confuses the whole picture, and brings no compensating advantage. The heathen among whom the Jews of the Dispersion dwelt in Syria, Egypt, Rome, and elsewhere, were of course, some of them rich, and some of them poor. But wealthy Pagans were not more apt to persecute Jews, whether Christians or not, than the needy Pagan populace. If there was any difference between heathen rich and poor in this matter, it was the fanatical and plunder-seeking mob, rather than the contemptuous and easy-going rich, who were likely to begin a persecution of the Jews, just as in Russia or Germany at the present time. And St. James would not be likely to talk of "the Lord of Sabaoth" (v. 4) in addressing wealthy Pagans. But the social antagonism so often alluded to in the Epistle, when interpreted to mean an antagonism between Jew and Jew, corresponds to a state of society which is known to have existed in Palestine and the neighbouring countries during the half-century which preceded the Jewish war of A.D. 66-70. (Comp. Matt. xi. 5; xix. 23, 24; Luke i. 53; vi. 20, 24; xvi. 19, 20.) During that period the wealthy Jews allied themselves with the Romans, in order more securely to oppress their poorer fellow-countrymen. And seeing that the Gospel in the first instance spread chiefly among the poor, this social

antagonism between rich and poor Jews frequently became an antagonism between unbelieving and believing Jews. St. James, well aware of this state of things, from personal experience in Judæa, and hearing similar things of the Jews of the Dispersion in Syria, reasonably supposes that this unnatural tyranny of Jew over Jew prevails elsewhere also, and addresses all "the twelve tribes which are of the Diaspora" on the subject.[1] In any case his opportunities of knowing a very great deal respecting Jews in various parts of the world were large. Jews from all regions were constantly visiting Jerusalem. But the knowledge which he must have had respecting the condition of things in Palestine and Syria would be quite sufficient to explain what is said in this Epistle respecting the tyranny of the rich over the poor.

The *Diaspora*,[2] or *Dispersion of the Jews* throughout the inhabited world, had been brought about in various ways, and had continued through many centuries. The two chief causes were *forcible deportation* and *voluntary emigration*. It was a common policy of Oriental conquerors to transport whole populations, in order more completely to subjugate them; and hence the Assyrian and Babylonian conquerors of Israel carried away great multitudes of Jews to the East, sending Eastern populations to take their place. Pompey on a much smaller

[1] See Salmon, *Introduction to the N. T.*, p. 502, 4th ed. (Murray, 1889); Renan, *L'Antechrist*, p. xii.; Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. vii., p. 451, Eng. Tr. (Longmans, 1885); Weiss, *Introduction to the N. T.*, vol. ii., pp. 102-3 (Hodder and Stoughton, 1888).

[2] See the immense amount of information collected in Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, div. ii., vol. ii., pp. 219-327; also Westcott's article "Dispersion," in Smith's *Dict. of Bible;* Herzog and Plitt, *Real-Encykl.*, vol. vii., pp. 203-8; and esp. Philo, *Legat. ad Caium.*

scale transported Jewish captives to the West, carrying hundreds of Jews to Rome. But disturbances in Palestine, and opportunities of trade elsewhere, induced large multitudes of Jews to emigrate of their own accord, especially to the neighbouring countries of Egypt and Syria; and the great commercial centres in Asia Minor, Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Miletus, Pergamus, Cyprus, and Rhodes contained large numbers of Jews. While Palestine was the battle-field of foreign armies, and while newly founded towns were trying to attract population by offering privileges to settlers, thousands of Jews preferred the advantages of a secure home in exile to the risks which attended residence in their native country.

At the time when this Epistle was written three chief divisions of the Dispersion were recognized—the Babylonian, which ranked as the first, the Syrian, and the Egyptian. But the Diaspora was by no means confined to these three centres. About two hundred years before this time the composer of one of the so-called Sibylline Oracles could address the Jewish nation, and say, "But every land is full of thee,—aye and every ocean."[1] And there is abundance of evidence, both in the Bible and outside it, especially in Josephus and Philo, that such language does not go beyond the limits of justifiable hyperbole. The list of peoples represented at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, "from every nation under heaven," tells one a great deal (Acts ii. 5-11. Comp. xv. 21, and 1 Macc. xv. 15-24). Many passages from Josephus might be quoted (*Ant.* XI. v. 2; XIV. vii. 2; *Bell. Jud.* II. xvi. 4; VII. iii. 3), as stating in general terms the same fact. But perhaps no original

[1] Πᾶσα δὲ γαῖα σέθεν πλήρης καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα.

authority gives us more information than Philo, in his famous treatise *On the Embassy to the Emperor Caius*, which went to Rome (*c.* A.D. 40) to obtain the revocation of a decree requiring the Jews to pay divine homage to the Emperor's statue. In that treatise we read that "Jerusalem is the metropolis, not of the single country of Judæa, but of most countries, because of the colonies which she has sent out, as opportunity offered, into the neighbouring lands of Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, and Cœlesyria, and the more distant lands of Pamphylia and Cilicia, most of Asia, as far as Bithynia and the utmost corners of Pontus; likewise unto Europe, Thessaly, Bœotia, Macedonia, Ætolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, with the most parts and best parts of Greece. And not only are the continents full of Jewish colonies, but also the most notable of the islands—Eubœa, Cyprus, Crete—to say nothing of the lands beyond the Euphrates. For all, excepting a small part of Babylon and those satrapies which contain the excellent land around it, contain Jewish inhabitants. So that if my country were to obtain a share in thy clemency it would not be one city that would be benefited, but ten thousand others, situated in every part of the inhabited world—Europe, Asia, Libya, continental and insular, maritime and inland" (*De Legat. ad Caium* xxxvi., Gelen., pp. 1031-32). It was therefore an enormous circle of readers that St. James addressed when he wrote "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," although it seems to have been a long time before his letter became known to the most important of the divisions of the Diaspora, viz. the Jewish settlement in Egypt, which had its chief centre in Alexandria. We may reasonably suppose that it was the Syrian division which he had chiefly in view

in writing, and it was to them, no doubt, that the letter in the first instance was sent. It is of this division that Josephus writes that, widely dispersed as the Jewish race is over the whole of the inhabited world, it is most largely mingled with Syria on account of its proximity, and especially in Antioch, where the kings since Antiochus had afforded them undisturbed tranquillity and equal privileges with the heathen; so that they multiplied exceedingly, and made many proselytes (*Bell. Jud.* VII. iii. 3).

The enormous significance of the Dispersion as a preparation for Christianity must not be overlooked. It showed to both Jew and Gentile alike that the barriers which had hedged in and isolated the hermit nation had broken down, and that what had ceased to be thus isolated had changed its character. A *kingdom* had become a *religion*. What henceforth distinguished the Jews in the eyes of all the world was not their country or their government, but their creed, and through this they exercised upon those among whom they were scattered an influence which had been impossible under the old conditions of exclusiveness. They themselves also were forced to understand their own religion better. When the keeping of the letter of the Law became an impossibility, they were compelled to penetrate into its spirit; and what they exhibited to the heathen was not a mere code of burdensome rites and ceremonies, but a moral life and a worship in spirit and truth. The universality of the services of the synagogue taught the Jew that God's worship was not confined to Jerusalem, and their simplicity attracted proselytes who might have turned away from the complex and bloody liturgies of the Temple. Even in matters of detail the services in the synagogue prepared

the way for the services of the Christian Church. The regular lessons—read from two divisions of Scripture, the antiphonal singing, the turning towards the east, the general Amen of the whole congregation, the observance of the third, sixth, and ninth hours as hours of prayer, and of one day in seven as specially holy—all these things, together with some others which have since become obsolete, meet us in the synagogue worship, as St. James knew it, and in the liturgies of the Christian Church, which he and the Apostles and their successors helped to frame. Thus justice once more became mercy, and a punishment was turned into a blessing. The captivity of the Jew became the freedom of both Jew and Gentile, and the scattering of Israel was the gathering in of all nations unto God. "He hath scattered abroad; He hath given to the poor: His righteousness abideth for ever" (Ps. cxii. 9; 2 Cor. ix. 9).

CHAPTER V.

THE RELATION OF THIS EPISTLE TO THE WRITINGS OF ST. PAUL AND OF ST. PETER. THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE. THE DOCTRINE OF JOY IN TEMPTATION.

"Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations, knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing."—JAMES i. 2-4.

THIS passage at once raises the question of the relation of this Epistle to other writings in the New Testament. Did the writer of it know any of the writings of St. Paul or of St. Peter? It is contended in some quarters that the similarity of thought and expression in several passages is so great as to prove such knowledge, and it is argued that such knowledge tells against the genuineness of the Epistle. In any case the question of the *date* of the Epistle is involved in its relation to these other documents; it was written after them, if it can be established that the author of it was acquainted with them.

With Dr. Salmon[1] we may dismiss the coincidences which have been pointed out by Davidson and others between expressions in this Epistle and the Epistles to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Philippians. Some critics seem to forget that a large number of words

[1] *Introduction to the N. T.*, pp. 509-10, 4th Ed.

and phrases were part of the common language, not merely of Jews and early Christians, but of those who were in the habit of mixing much with such persons. We can no more argue from such phrases as "be not deceived" (1 Cor. vi. 9; xv. 33; Gal. vi. 7, and James i. 16), "but some one will say" (1 Cor. xv. 35, and James ii. 18), "a transgressor of the law" (Rom. ii. 25, 27, and James ii. 11), "fruit of righteousness" (Phil. i. 11, and James iii. 18), or from such words as "entire" (1 Thess. v. 23, and James i. 4), "transgressor" used absolutely (Gal. ii. 18, and James ii. 9), and the like, that when they occur in two writings the author of one must have read the other, than we can argue from such phrases as "natural selection," "survival of the fittest," and the like that the writer who uses them has read the works of Darwin. A certain amount of stereotyped phraseology is part of the intellectual atmosphere of each generation, and the writers in each generation make common use of it. In such cases even striking identity of expressions may prove nothing as to the dependence of one author upon another. The obligation is not of one writer to another, but of both to a common and indefinite source. In other words, both writers quite naturally make use of language which is current in the circles in which they live.[1]

[1] It is quite possible that both St. Paul and St. James derive the phrase "a transgressor of the law" from the remarkable addition to the canonical Gospels which is found in Codex D (Beza) after Luke vi. 4: "The same day He beheld a certain man working on the Sabbath, and said to him, Man, if thou knowest what thou art doing, blessed art thou; but if thou knowest not thou art accursed and *a transgressor of the law*." Note that in Rom. ii., where the phrase occurs twice (vv. 25, 27), the address "O man" also occurs twice. Comp. Gal. ii. 18, and see A. Resch, *Agrapha; Aussercanonische Evangelienfragmente* (Leipzig, 1889), pp. 36, 189-92.

Some of the coincidences between the Epistle of James and the Epistle to the *Romans* are of a character to raise the question whether they can satisfactorily be explained by considerations of this kind, and one of these more remarkable coincidences occurs in the passage before us. St. James writes, "Knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience." St. Paul writes, "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, probation" (Rom. v. 3). In this same chapter we have another instance. St. James says, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (i. 22). St. Paul says, "Not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified" (Rom. 13). There is yet a third such parallel. St. James asks, "Whence come fightings? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures which war in your members?" (iv. 1). St. Paul laments, "I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind" (Rom. vii. 23).[1]

The effect of this evidence will be different upon different minds. But it may reasonably be doubted whether these passages, even when summed up together, are stronger than many other strange coincidences in

[1] In order to do justice to these coincidences one must look at them in the original Greek; but to those who cannot read Greek the accuracy of the Revised Version gives a very fair idea of the amount of similarity.

1. γινώσκοντες ὅτι τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως κατεργάζεται ὑπομονήν (James i. 3): εἰδότες ὅτι ἡ θλῖψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται, ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ δοκιμήν (Rom. v. 3).

2. γίνεσθε δὲ ποιηταὶ λόγου καὶ μὴ ἀκροαταὶ μόνον (James i. 22): οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται (Rom. ii. 13).

3. ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν (James iv. 1): ἕτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου ἀντιστρατευόμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μου (Rom vii. 23).

literature, which are known to be accidental. The second instance, taken by itself, is of little weight; for the contrast between hearers and doers is one of the most hackneyed commonplaces of rhetoric. But assuming that a *primâ facie* case has been established, and that one of the two writers has seen the Epistle of the other, no difficulty is created, whichever we assume to have written first. The Epistle to the Romans was written in A.D. 58, and might easily have become known to St. James before A.D. 62. On the other hand, the Epistle of St. James may be placed anywhere between A.D. 45 and 62, and in that case might easily have become known to St. Paul before A.D. 58. And of the two alternatives, this latter is perhaps the more probable. We shall find other reasons for placing the Epistle of St. James earlier than A.D. 58; and we may reasonably suppose that had he read the Epistle to the Romans, he would have expressed his meaning respecting justification somewhat differently. Had he wished (as some erroneously suppose) to oppose and correct the teaching of St. Paul, he would have done so much more unmistakably. And as he is really quite in harmony with St. Paul on the question, he would, if he had read him, have avoided words which look like a contradiction of St. Paul's words.

It remains to examine the relations between our Epistle and the First Epistle of St. Peter. Here, again, one of the coincidences occurs in the passage before us. St. James writes, "Count it all joy, when ye enter into manifold temptations; knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience;" and St. Peter writes, "Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations, that the proof of your faith . . . might be

found" (1 Peter i. 6, 7). Here there is the thought of rejoicing in trials common to both passages, and the expressions for "manifold temptations" and "proof of your patience" are identical in the two places. This is remarkable, especially when taken with other coincidences. On the other hand, the fact that some of the language is common to all three Epistles (James, Peter, and Romans) suggests the possibility that we have here one of the "faithful sayings" of primitive Christianity, rather than one or two writers remembering the writings of a predecessor.

In three places St. James and St. Peter both quote the same passages from the Old Testament. In i. 10, 11 St. James has, "*As the flower of the grass* he shall pass away. For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and *withereth the grass; and the flower* thereof *falleth*," where the words in italics are from Isaiah xl. 6-8. St. Peter (i. 24) quotes the words of Isaiah much more completely and consecutively, and in their original sense; he does not merely make a free use of portions of them. Again, in iv. 6 St. James quotes from Prov. iii. 34, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." In v. 5 St. Peter quotes exactly the same words. Lastly, in v. 20 St. James quotes from Prov. x. 12 the expression "covereth sins." In iv. 8 St. Peter quotes a word more of the original, "love covereth sins." And it will be observed that both St. James and St. Peter change "covereth *all* sins" into "covereth *a multitude* of sins."

Once more we must be content to give a verdict of "Not proven." There is a certain amount of probability, but nothing that amounts to proof, that one of these writers had seen the other's Epistle. Let us, however, assume that echoes of one Epistle are found in the

other; then, whichever letter we put first, we have no chronological difficulty. The probable dates of death are, for St. James A.D. 62, for St. Peter A.D. 64-68. Either Epistle may be placed in the six or seven years immediately preceding A.D. 62, and one of the most recent critics[1] places 1 Peter in the middle of the year A.D. 50, and the Epistle of James any time after that date. But there are good reasons for believing that 1 Peter contains references to the persecution under Nero, that "fiery trial" (iv. 12) in which the mere being a Christian would lead to penal consequences (iv. 16), and in which, for conscience' sake, men would have to "endure griefs, suffering wrongfully" (ii. 19), thereby being "partakers of Christ's sufferings" (iv. 13). In which case 1 Peter cannot be placed earlier than A.D. 64, and the Epistle of James must be the earlier of the two. And it seems to be chiefly those who would make our Epistle a forgery of the second century (Brückner, Holtzmann) who consider that it is James that echoes 1 Peter, rather than 1 Peter that reproduces James. There is a powerful consensus of opinion[2] that if there is any influence of one writer upon the other, it is St. James who influences St. Peter, and not the other way.

We must not place the Epistle of St. James in or close after A.D. 50. The crisis respecting the treatment of Gentile converts was then at its height (Acts xv.); and it would be extraordinary if a letter written in the midst of the crisis, and by the person who took the leading part in dealing with it, should contain no allu-

[1] B. Weiss, *Introduction to the N. T.*, vol. ii., pp. 106, 150 (Hodder and Stoughton, 1888).

[2] Beyschlag's revision of Meyer's *Brie des Jacobus* (Göttingen, 1888), p. 22.

sion to it. The Epistle must be placed either before (A.D. 45-49) or some time after (A.D. 53-62) the so-called Council of Jerusalem. There is reason for believing that the controversy about compelling Gentiles to observe the Mosaic Law, although sharp and critical, was not very lasting. The *modus vivendi* decreed by the Apostles was on the whole loyally accepted, and therefore a letter written a few years after it was promulgated would not of necessity take any notice of it. Indeed, to have revived the question again might have been impolitic, as implying either that there was still some doubt on the point, or that the Apostolic decision had proved futile.

In deciding between the two periods (A.D. 45-49 and 53-62) for the date of the Epistle of St. James, we have not much to guide us if we adopt the view that it is independent of the writings of St. Peter and of St. Paul. There is plenty in the letter to lead us to suppose that it was written before the war (A.D. 66-70) which put an end to the tyranny of the wealthy Sadducees over their poorer brethren, before controversies between Jewish and Gentile Christians such as we find at Corinth had arisen or become chronic, and before doctrinal controversies had sprung up in the Church; also that it was written at a time when the coming of Christ to judgment was still regarded as near at hand (v. 8), and by some one who could recollect the words of Christ independently of the Gospels, and who therefore must have stood in close relationship to Him. All this points to its having been written within the lifetime of James the Lord's brother, and by such a person as he was; but it does not seem to be decisive as to the difference between *c.* A.D. 49 and *c.* A.D. 59. We must be content to leave this undecided. But it is

worth while pointing out that if we place it earlier than A.D. 52 we make it the earliest book in the New Testament. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written late in A.D. 52 or early in 53; and excepting our Epistle, and *perhaps* 1 Peter, there is no other writing in the New Testament that can reasonably be placed at so early a date as 52.

"Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations." "My brethren," with or without the epithet "beloved," is the regular form of address throughout the Epistle (16, 19; ii. 1, 5, 14; iii. 1, 10, 12; v. 12), in one or two places the "my" being omitted (iv. 11; v. 7, 9, 19). The frequency of this brotherly address seems to indicate how strongly the writer feels, and wishes his readers to feel, the ties of race and of faith which bind them together.

In "Count it all joy," *i.e.* "Consider it as nothing but matter for rejoicing,"[1] we miss a linguistic touch which is evident in the Greek, but cannot well be preserved in English. In saying "joy" (*χάραν*) St. James is apparently carrying on the idea just started in the address, "greeting" (*χαίρειν*), *i.e.* "wishing joy." "I wish you *joy;* and you must account as pure *joy* all the troubles into which you may fall." This carrying on a word or thought from one sentence into the next is characteristic of St. James, and reminds us somewhat of the style of St. John. Thus "The proof of your faith worketh *patience.* And let *patience* have its perfect work" (i. 3, 4). "*Lacking* in nothing. But if any of

[1] This rendering has been questioned; but it is justified by such expressions as *πᾶσαν ἀληθείην μυθήσομαι*, "I will tell nothing but what is true" (Hom. *Od.* xi. 507). See *Pastoral Epistles* in this series, p. 392.

you *lacketh* wisdom" (4, 5). "Nothing *doubting:* for he that *doubteth* is like the surge of the sea" (6). "The lust, when it hath conceived, beareth *sin;* and the *sin*, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death" (15). "Slow to *wrath:* for the *wrath* of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (19, 20). "This man's *religion* is vain. Pure *religion* and undefiled before our God and Father is this" (26, 27). "In many things we all *stumble.* If any man *stumbleth* not in word" (iii. 2). "Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a *fire!* And the tongue is a *fire*" (iii. 5, 6). "Ye have not, because ye *ask* not. Ye *ask*, and receive not" (iv. 2, 3). "Your gold and your silver are *rusted;* and their *rust* shall be for a testimony against you" (v. 3). "We call them blessed which *endured:* ye have heard of the *endurance* of Job" (v. 11).

It is just possible that "*all* joy" (*πᾶσαν χάραν*) is meant exactly to balance "*manifold* temptations" (*πειρασμοῖς ποικίλοις*). Great *diversity* of troubles is to be considered as in reality *every kind* of joy. Nevertheless, the troubles are not to be of our own making or seeking. It is not when we inflict suffering on ourselves, but when we "fall into" it, and therefore may regard it as placed in our way by God, that we are to look upon it as a source of joy rather than of sorrow. The word for "fall into" (*περιπίπτειν*) implies not only that what one falls into is unwelcome, but also that it is unsought and unexpected. Moreover, it implies that this unforeseen misfortune is large enough to encircle or overwhelm one. It indicates a *serious* calamity. The word for "temptations" in this passage is the same as is used in the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer; but the word is not used in the same sense in both places. In the Lord's Prayer all kinds of temptation are in-

cluded, and especially the internal solicitations of the devil, as is shown by the next petition: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the tempter." In the passage before us internal temptations, if not actually excluded, are certainly quite in the background. What St. James has principally in his mind are *external* trials, such as poverty of intellect (ver. 5), or of substance (ver. 9), or persecution (ii. 6, 7), and the like; those worldly troubles which test our faith, loyalty, and obedience, and tempt us to abandon our trust in God, and to cease to strive to please Him. The trials by which Satan was allowed to tempt Job are the kind of temptations to be understood here.[1] They are material for spiritual joy, because (1) they are opportunities for practising virtue, which cannot be learned without practice, nor practised without opportunities; (2) they teach us that we have here no abiding city, for a world in which such things are possible cannot be a lasting home; (3) they make us more Christlike; (4) we have the assurance of Divine support, and that no more will ever be laid upon us than we, relying upon that support, can bear; (5) we have the assurance of abundant compensation here and hereafter.

St. James here is only echoing the teaching of his Brother: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. v. 11, 12). In the first days after Pentecost he had seen the Apostles acting in the very spirit which he here enjoins, and he had himself very probably taken

[1] See F. D. Maurice, *Unity of the N. T.* (Parker, 1854), p. 318.

part in doing so, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name" (Acts v. 41. Comp. iv. 23-30). And as we have already seen in comparing the parallel passages, St. Peter (1 Peter 1, 6) and St. Paul (Rom. v. 3) teach the same doctrine of rejoicing in tribulation.

As St. Augustine long ago pointed out, in his letter to Anastasius (*Ep.* cxlv. 7, 8), and Hooker also (*Eccl. Pol.* V. xlviii. 13), there is no inconsistency in teaching such doctrine, and yet praying, "Lead us not into temptation." Not only is there no sin in shrinking from both external trials and internal temptations, or in desiring to be freed from such things; but such is the weakness of the human will, that it is only reasonable humility to pray to God not to allow us to be subjected to severe trials. Nevertheless, when God, in His wisdom, has permitted such things to come upon us, the right course is, not to be cast down and sorrowful, as though something quite intolerable had overtaken us, but to rejoice that God has thought us capable of enduring something for His sake, and has given us the opportunity of strengthening our patience and our trust in Him.

This doctrine of joy in suffering, which at first sight seems to be almost superhuman, is shown by experience to be less hard than the apparently more human doctrine of resignation and fortitude. The effort to be resigned, and to suffer without complaining, is not a very inspiriting effort. Its tendency is towards depression. It does not lift us out of ourselves or above our tribulations. On the contrary, it leads rather to self-contemplation and a brooding over miseries. Between mere resignation and thankful joy there is all the difference that there is between mere

obedience and affectionate trust. The one is submission; the other is love. It is in the long run easier to rejoice in tribulation, and be thankful for it, than to be merely resigned and submit patiently. And therefore this "hard saying" is really a merciful one, for it teaches us to endure trials in the spirit that will make us feel them least. It is not only "a good thing to sing praises unto our God;" it is also "a joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful" (Ps. cxlvii. 1).

And here it may be noticed that St. James is no Cynic or Stoic. He does not tell us that we are to anticipate misfortune, and cut ourselves off from all those things the loss of which might involve suffering; or that we are to trample on our feelings, and act as if we had none, treating sufferings as if they were non-existent, or as if they in no way affected us. He does not teach us that as Christians we live in an atmosphere in which excruciating pain, whether of body or mind, is a matter of pure indifference, and that such emotions as fear or grief under the influence of adversity, and hope or joy under the influence of prosperity, are utterly unworthy and contemptible. There is not a hint of anything of the kind. He points out to us that temptations, and especially external trials, are really blessings, if we use them aright; and he teaches us to meet them in that conviction. And it is manifest that the spirit in which to welcome a blessing is the spirit of joy and thankfulness.

St. James does not bid us accept this doctrine of joy in tribulation upon his personal authority. It is no philosopher's *ipse dixit.* He appeals to his readers' own experience: "Knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience." "Knowing" (γινώσκοντες), *i.e.* "in that ye are continually finding out and getting

to know." The verb and the tense indicate progressive and continuous knowledge, as by the experience of daily life; and this teaches us that proving and testing not only brings to light, but brings into existence, patience. This patience (ὑπομονή), this abiding firm under attack or pressure, must be allowed full scope to regulate all our conduct; and then we shall see why trials are a matter for joy rather than sorrow, when we find ourselves moving onwards towards, not the barrenness of Stoical "self-sufficiency" (αὐτάρκεια), but the fulness of Divine perfection. "That ye may be perfect and entire,[1] lacking in nothing," is perhaps one of the many reminiscences of Christ's words which we shall find in this letter of the Lord's brother. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48).

[1] On the strength of the word for "entire" (ὁλόκληρος). which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, excepting 1 Thess. v. 23, it has been asserted that the writer of this Epistle must have seen that passage. The adjective is used in the Septuagint of whole, unhewn stones, *saxis informibus et impolitis* (Deut. xxvii. 6), and in Josephus of entire animals used for sacrifice (*Ant.* III. ix. 2). It is fairly common in Plato and Aristotle. The substantive ὁλοκληρία occurs in Acts iii. 16, of the "perfect soundness" given to the impotent man, and in the Septuagint (Isa. i. 6), of the "soundness" which was wholly wanting in Israel. If St. James did not get his knowledge of the word simply from his knowledge of the Greek language, which is manifestly very complete, he probably derived it from the Septuagint. It is absurd to base an argument as to acquaintance with 1 Thessalonians on so common a word.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RELATION OF THIS EPISTLE TO THE BOOKS OF ECCLESIASTICUS AND OF THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON. THE VALUE OF THE APOCRYPHA, AND THE MISCHIEF OF NEGLECTING IT.

"But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."—St. James i. 5-8.

THE previous section led us to the question as to the relation of this Epistle to certain Christian writings, and in particular to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, and to the First Epistle of St. Peter. The present section, combined with the preceding one, raises a similar question—the relation of our Epistle to certain Jewish writings, and especially the Books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon.

The two sets of questions are not parallel. In the former case, even if we could determine that the writer of one Epistle had certainly seen the Epistle of the other, we should still be uncertain as to which had written first. Here, if the similarity is found to be too great to be accounted for by common influences acting upon both writers, and we are compelled to suppose

that one has made use of the writing of the other, there cannot be any doubt as to the side on which the obligation lies. The Book of Ecclesiasticus certainly, and the Book of Wisdom possibly, had come into circulation long before St. James was born. And if, with some of the latest writers[1] on the subject, we place the Book of Wisdom as late as A.D. 40, it nevertheless was written in plenty of time for St. James to have become acquainted with it before he wrote his Epistle. Although some doubts have been expressed on the subject, the number of similarities, both of thought and expression, between the Epistle of St. James and Ecclesiasticus is too great to be reasonably accounted for without the supposition that St. James was not only acquainted with the book, but fond of its contents. And it is to be remembered, in forming an opinion on the subject, that there is nothing intrinsically improbable in the supposition that St. James had read Ecclesiasticus. Indeed, the improbability would rather be the other way. Even if there were no coincidences of ideas and language between our Epistle and Ecclesiasticus, we know enough about St. James and about the circulation of Ecclesiasticus to say that he was likely to become acquainted with it. As Dr. Salmon remarks on the use of the Apocrypha generally, "The books we know as Apocrypha are nearly all earlier than the New Testament writers, *who could not well have been ignorant of them;* and therefore coincidences between the former and the latter are not likely to have been the result of mere accident."[2]

But it will be worth while to quote a decided expression of opinion, on each side of the question

[1] Grätz, Noack, Plumptre, F. W. Farrer.

[2] *The Speaker's Commentary, Apocrypha*, vol. i., p. xli. (Murray, 1888)

immediately before us, from the writings of scholars who are certainly well qualified to give a decided opinion. On the one hand, Bernhard Weiss says, "It has been incorrectly held by most that the author adheres very closely to Jesus Sirach. . . . But it must be distinctly denied that there is anywhere an echo of the Book of Wisdom."[1] On the other hand, Dr. Edersheim, after pointing out the parallel between Ecclus xii. 10, 11, and James v. 3, concludes, "In view of all this it *cannot be doubted* that both the simile and the expression of it in the Epistle of St. James were derived from Ecclesiasticus." And then he gives some more coincidences between the two writings, and sums up thus: "But if the result is to *prove beyond doubt* the familiarity of St. James with a book which at the time was evidently in wide circulation, it exhibits with even greater clearness the immense spiritual difference between the standpoint occupied in Ecclesiasticus and that in the Epistle of St. James."[2] And Archdeacon Farrar quotes with approval an estimate that St. James "alludes more or less directly to the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon at least five times, but to the Book of Ecclesiasticus more than fifteen times. . . . The fact is the more striking because in other respects St. James shows no sympathy with Alexandrian speculations. There is not in him the faintest tinge of Philonian philosophy; on the contrary, he belongs in a marked degree to the school of Jerusalem. He is a thorough Hebraiser, a typical Judaist. All his thoughts and phrases move normally in the Palestinian sphere.

[1] *Introduction to the N. T.*, vol. ii., pp. 114, 115 (Hodder and Stoughton, 1888).

[2] *The Speaker's Commentary, Apocrypha*, vol. ii., pp. 22, 23 (Murray, 1888).

This is a curious and almost unnoticed phenomenon. The "sapiential literature" of the Old Testament was the *least* specifically Israelite. It was the direct precursor of Alexandrian morals. It deals with mankind, and not with the Jew. Yet St. James, who shows so much partiality for this literature, is of all the writers of the New Testament the least Alexandrian, and the most Judaic."[1]

Let us endeavour to form an opinion for ourselves; and the only way in which to do this with thoroughness is to place side by side, in the original Greek, the passages in which there seems to be coincidence between the two writers. Want of space prevents this from being done here. But some of the most striking coincidences shall be placed in parallel columns, and where the coincidence is inadequately represented by the English Version the Greek shall be given also. Other coincidences, which are not drawn out in full, will be added, to enable students who care to examine the evidence more in detail to do so without much trouble. Two Bibles, or, still better, a Septuagint and a Greek Testament, will serve the purpose of parallel columns.

It will be found that by far the greater number of coincidences occur in the first chapter, a fact which suggests the conjecture that St. James had been reading Ecclesiasticus shortly before he began to write. In the middle of the Epistle there is very little that strongly recalls the son of Sirach. In the last chapter there are one or two striking parallels; but by far the larger proportion is in the first chapter.

[1] *The Early Days of Christianity*, vol. i., pp. 517-18. Dr. Salmon leaves the question undecided (*Introduction to N. T.*, p. 511).

ECCLESIASTICUS.

1. A patient man will bear for a time, and afterward joy shall spring up unto him (i. 23).

My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation (*πειρασμόν*). Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure. . . . Whatsoever is brought upon thee take cheerfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate. For gold is tried (*δοκιμάζεται*) in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity (ii. 1-5).

2. If thou desire wisdom (*σοφίαν*), keep the commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee (i. 26).

I desired wisdom (*σοφίαν*) openly in my prayer. . . . The Lord hath given me a tongue for my reward (li. 13, 22).

Thy desire for wisdom (*σοφίας*) shall be given thee (vi. 37. Comp. xliii. 33). [A fool] will give little, and will upbraid (*ὀνειδίσει*) much (xx. 15).

After thou hast given, upbraid (*ὀνείδιζε*) not (xli. 22. Comp. xviii. 18).

3. Distrust not the fear of the Lord; and come not unto Him with a double heart (i. 28).

Woe be to fearful hearts, and faint hands, and the sinner that goeth two ways (ii. 12).

Be not faint-hearted when thou makest thy prayer (vii. 10. Comp. xxxiii. 2; xxxv. 16, 17).

4. Exalt not thyself, lest thou fall, and bring dishonour upon thy soul (i. 30).

The greater thou art, the more humble thyself, and thou shalt find favour before the Lord (iii. 18. Comp. xxxi. 1-9).

ST. JAMES.

Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations (*πειρασμοῖς*), knowing that the proof (*τὸ δοκίμιον*) of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing (i. 2-4).

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation (*πειρασμόν*); for when he hath been approved (*δόκιμος γενόμενος*), he shall receive the crown of life (i. 12).

But if any of you lacketh wisdom (*σοφίαν*), let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not (*μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος*); and it shall be given him (i. 5).

But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (i. 6-8. Comp. iv. 8).

But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate; and the rich in that he is made low (i. 9, 10).

Ecclesiasticus (*continued*).	St. James (*continued*).
5. Say not thou, It is through the Lord that I fell away: for thou oughtest not to do the things that He hateth. Say not thou, He hath caused me to err: for He hath no need of the sinful man (xv. 11, 12).	Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man (i. 13).
6. Be swift in thy listening (*ταχὺς ἐν ἀκροάσει σου*); and with patience give answer (v. 11).	Let every man be swift to hear (*ταχὺς εἰς τὸ ἀκοῦσαι*), slow to speak, slow to wrath (i. 19).
7. Thou shalt be to him as one that hath wiped a mirror (*ἔσοπτρον*), and shalt know that it is not rusted (*κατίωται*) for ever (xii. 11). Like as bronze rusteth (*ἰοῦται*), so is his wickedness (xii. 10). Lose money through a brother and a friend, and let it not rust (*ἰωθήτω*) under the stone unto loss (xxix. 10).	He is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror (*ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ*). . . . Your gold and your silver are rusted (*κατίωται*); and their rust (*ἰός*) shall be a testimony against you (i. 23; v. 3).
8. He that looketh in (*ὁ παρακύπτων*) through her windows, *i.e.* the windows of wisdom (xiv. 23). A fool peepeth in (*παρακύπτει*) at the door (xxi. 23).	He that looketh into (*ὁ παρακύψας*) the perfect law (i. 25).
9. A prey of lions are wild asses in the wilderness; so the fodder of the rich are the poor (*οὕτω νομαὶ πλουσίων πτωχοί*: xiii. 19. Comp. xiii. 3, 17, 18).	But ye have dishonoured the poor man (*τὸν πτωχόν*). Do not the rich (*οἱ πλούσιοι*) oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? (ii. 6).

It will be observed that of these nine examples all come out of the first two chapters of St. James, and six are from the first two chapters of Ecclesiasticus. This fact is worth considering in estimating the probabilities of St. James being under the influence of this earlier and popular book. Owing to recent reading, or some other cause, he seems to have been specially familiar with the opening chapters of Ecclesiasticus.

Probably most persons who study these coincidences will be of the opinion that Bernhard Weiss is needlessly cautious and sceptical when he refuses to assent to the common opinion that in some portions of the Epistle St. James closely follows the Wisdom of Jesus, the son of Sirach. The strongest coincidence is the seventh in the table. The word for "to rust" (*κατιόω*) occurs nowhere else either in the Septuagint or in the New Testament, and the passages in Ecclesiasticus and St. James "are the only Biblical passages in which the figure of rust as affecting unused silver and gold occurs" (Edersheim). The fifth instance is also very striking.

Let us now look at some of the coincidences between the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon and the Epistle of St. James.

WISDOM.	ST. JAMES.
1. The hope of the ungodly is like thistle-down carried away by the wind; like a thin froth that is driven away by the blast, and like smoke is dispersed by the wind (v. 14. Comp. *μαρανθῆναι* in ii. 8).	He that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. . . . As the flower of the grass he shall pass away. . . . So also shall the rich man fade away (*μαρανθήσεται*) in his ways (i. 6, 10, 11).
2. In eternity it weareth a crown and triumpheth (iv. 2).	When he hath been approved he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him (i. 12).
3. The alterations of the solstices and the change of seasons (*τροπῶν ἀλλαγὰς καὶ μεταβολὰς καιρῶν*: vii. 18).	With whom can be no variation, neither shadow of turning (*παρ' ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγὴ ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα*: i. 17).
4. Let us oppress (*καταδυναστεύσωμεν*) the poor righteous man. . . . Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture (ii. 10, 19).	Ye have dishonoured the poor man Do not the rich oppress (*καταδυναστεύουσιν*) you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? (ii. 6).
5. For the lowest is pardonable by mercy; but mighty men shall be mightily chastised (vi. 6).	For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment (ii. 13).

Wisdom (*continued*).	St. James (*continued*).
6. What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with our vaunting (ἀλαζονείας) brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasted by, etc. etc.; even so we, as soon as we were born, came to an end" (v. 8-14).	Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. . . . But now ye glory in your vauntings (ἀλαζονίαις): all such glorying is evil (iv. 13-16).
7. Let us lie in wait for the righteous (τὸν δίκαιον). . . . Let us condemn him (καταδικάσωμεν) with a shameful death (ii. 12, 20).	Ye have condemned (κατεδικάσατε), ye have killed the righteous one (τὸν δίκαιον); he doth not resist you (v. 6).

It will at once be perceived that these parallels are neither so numerous nor so convincing as those which have been pointed out between Ecclesiasticus and the Epistle of St. James; but they are sufficient to make a *primâ facie* case of considerable probability, whatever date we assign to the Book of Wisdom. This probability is strengthened by the fact that this book, with the rest of the Apocrypha or deutero-canonical writings, constituted to a large extent the *religious literature of the Jews of the Dispersion;* and therefore in writing to such Jews St. James would be likely to make conscious allusions to writings with which his hearers would be sure to be familiar; a consideration which strengthens the case as regards the coincidences with Ecclesiasticus, as well as regards those with the Wisdom of Solomon. Even if the probability as to the Alexandrian origin of Wisdom were a certainty, and if the conjectural date A.D. 40 were established, there would be nothing surprising in its becoming well known in Jerusalem within twenty years of its production. It is, therefore, far too

strong an assertion when Weiss declares that "it must be distinctly denied that there is anywhere [in the Epistle of St. James] an echo of the Book of Wisdom." All that one can safely say is that the evidence for his acquaintance with the book does not approach to proof.

But the use of these two books of the Apocrypha by writers in the New Testament does not depend upon the question whether St. James makes use of them or not. If this were the place to do it, it might be shown that other coincidences, both of language and thought, far too numerous and too strong to be all of them accidental, occur in the writings of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John.[1] Such things also occur outside the New Testament in the Epistles of Clement and of Barnabas; while Clement of Alexandria frequently quotes Ecclesiasticus with the introductory formula, "The Scripture saith."

These facts go a long way towards proving that the neglect of the Apocrypha which is so prevalent among ourselves is a thing which cannot be defended, either by an appeal to Scripture or by the practice of the primitive Church; for both the one and the other show a great respect for these deutero-canonical writings. That the New Lectionary omits a good deal of what used to be read publicly in church is not a thing to be lamented. We gladly sacrifice portions of the Apocrypha in order to obtain more of Ezekiel and Revelation. It is the neglect of them in private reading that is so much to be deplored. Passages which are too grotesque and too unspiritual to be edifying when read to a mixed congregation are nevertheless full of instruction, and throw most valuable light both on the Old and on the New Testament. The Apocryphal writings, instead

[1] See Dr. Salmon's *General Introduction* to the Apocrypha in the *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i., pp. xli., xlii.

of being a worthless interpolation between the Old Testament and the New, like a block of paltry buildings disfiguring two noble edifices, are among our best means of understanding how the Old Testament led up to the New, and prepared the way for it. They show us the Jewish mind under the combined influences of Jewish Scriptures, Gentile culture, and new phases of political life, and being gradually brought into the condition in which it either fiercely opposed or ardently accepted the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. A huge chasm yawns between Judaism as we leave it at the close of the Old Testament canon, and as we find it at the beginning of the Gospel history; and we have no better material with which to bridge the chasm than the writings of the Apocrypha. This is well brought out, not only in the commentary on the Apocrypha already quoted more than once, but also in a valuable review of the commentary from which some of what follows is taken.[1]

The neglect of the Apocrypha has not been by any means entirely accidental. It is partly the result of a deliberate protest against the action of the Council of Trent in placing these books on a level with the books of the Old and New Testament. In the seventeenth century we find the learned John Lightfoot writing, "Thus sweetly and nearly should the two Testaments join together, and thus Divinely should they kiss each other, but that the wretched Apocrypha doth thrust in between." And the fact that many people are now unable to recognize or appreciate an allusion to the Apocrypha is by no means the most serious result of this common neglect of its contents. Appreciation of the Bible in general, and especially of those books

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, No. 345, January, 1889, pp. 58–95.

in which the Old and New Testaments come most in contact, is materially diminished in consequence. The Apocrypha is not a barrier, but a bridge; it does not separate, but unite the two Covenants. What thoughtful reader can pass from the Old to the New Testament without feeling that he has entered another world? He is still in Palestine, still among the Jews; but how different from the Palestine and the Judaism of Ezra, and Nehemiah, and Malachi! He "finds mention of persons, and sects, and schools of which he can find no trace in the Old Testament. He comes upon beliefs and opinions for which the earlier canon does not even furnish a clue. He discovers institutions long settled, and dominating the religious life of the people, of which the Old Testament supplies not even the name. He finds popular ideas, religious terms and phrases in current use wholly unlike those of ancient psalmists and prophets." And there is no literature that can explain all these changes to him either so surely or so fully as the Apocrypha. It supplies instances of the early use of New Testament words, of old words in new senses. It throws light upon the growth of the popular conception of the Messiah. It illuminates still more the development of the doctrine of the Logos. Above all, it helps us to see something of the evolution of that strange religious system which became the raw material out of which the special doctrines of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes were formed, and which had a powerful influence upon Christianity itself.

The neglect of the Apocrypha has been greatly increased by the widespread practice of publishing Bibles without it, and even of striking out from the margins of these mutilated Bibles all references to it. And this mischief has lately been augmented by the fact that

the Revised Version omits it. Yet no portion of the Bible was in greater need of revision. The original texts used by the translators of 1611 were very bad; and perhaps in no part of the Authorized Version are utterly faulty translations more abundant. A comparison of the quotations given above with the text of the Authorized Version of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus will show that considerable changes have been made in order to bring the quotations into harmony with the true readings of the Greek text, and thus give a fair comparison with the words of St. James.

Books which the writers of the New Testament found worthy of study, and from which they derived some of their thoughts and language, ought not to be lightly disregarded by ourselves. We cannot disregard them without loss; and it is the duty of every reader of the Bible to see that his apprehension of the Old and New Testaments is not hindered through his ignorance of those writings which interpret the process of transition from the one to the other. Neglect of the helps to understanding His Word which God has placed easily within our reach may endanger our possession of that wisdom which St. James here assures us will be given to every one who asks for it in faith.

A discussion of that heavenly wisdom, and of the efficacy of prayer offered in faith, will be found in the expositions of later passages in the Epistle.[1]

[1] See on iii. 13-18, and on v. 13-18. In connexion with this subject the Inaugural Lecture of Professor Margoliouth, on *The Place of Ecclesiasticus in Semitic Literature* (Clarendon Press, 1890), and his defence of the position there maintained in the pages of the *Expositor*, should be studied. It is *possible* that from the language of Ecclesiasticus we may be able to demonstrate that the late date assigned by recent critics to certain books in the Old Testament is quite untenable for the language of them is centuries older than that of Ecclesiasticus

CHAPTER VII.

THE EXALTATION OF THE LOWLY, AND THE FADING AWAY OF THE RICH. THE METAPHORS OF ST. JAMES AND THE PARABLES OF CHRIST.

"But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun ariseth, with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings."—St. James i. 9-11.

IN this section St. James returns to what is the main thought of the first chapter, and one of the main thoughts of the whole Epistle, viz. the blessedness of enduring temptations, and especially such temptations as are caused by external trials and adversity. He adds another thought which may help to console and strengthen the oppressed Christian.

The Revisers have quite rightly restored the "But" (δέ) at the beginning of this section. There seems to be absolutely no authority for its omission; and we may conjecture that the earlier English translators ignored it, because it seemed to them to be superfluous, or even disturbing. The Rhemish Version, made from the Vulgate (*Glorietur autem*), is the only English Version which preserves it; and Luther (*Ein Bruder aber*) preserves it also. The force of the conjunction is to connect the advice given in this section with the items

of advice already given. They form a connected series. "Count it all joy, when ye fall into manifold temptations. . . . But (δέ) let patience have its perfect work. . . . But (δέ) if any lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God. . . . But (δέ) let him ask in faith. . . . But (δέ) let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich in that he is made low."

The meaning of this last item in the series is by no means clear. Various interpretations have been suggested, and it is difficult or even impossible to arrive at a conclusive decision as to which of them is the right one. But we may clear the ground by setting aside all explanations which would make "the brother of low degree" (ὁ ταπεινός) to mean the Christian who is lowly in heart (Matt. xi. 29), and "the rich" (ὁ πλούσιος) the Christian who is rich in faith (ii. 5) and in good works (1 Tim. vi. 18). Both words are to be understood literally. The lowly man is the man of humble position, oppressed by poverty, and perhaps by unscrupulous neighbours (ii. 3), and the rich man, here, as elsewhere in this Epistle, is the man of wealth who very often oppresses the poorer brethren (i. 11; ii. 6; v. 1).

What, then, is the meaning of the "high estate" (ὕψος) in which the brother of low degree is to glory, and of the "being made low" (ταπείνωσις), in which the rich man is to do the same? At first sight one is disposed to say that the one is the heavenly birthright, and the other the Divine humiliation, in which every one shares who becomes a member of Christ; in fact, that they are the same thing looked at from different points of view; for what to the Christian is promotion, to the world seems degradation. If this were correct, then we should have an antithesis analogous to that

which is drawn out by St. Paul, when he says, "He that was called in the Lord, being a bond-servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise he that was called, being free, is Christ's bond-servant" (1 Cor. vii. 22). But on further consideration this attractive explanation is found not to suit the context. What analogy is there between the humiliation in which every Christian glories in Christ and the withering of herbage under a scorching wind? Even if we could allow that this metaphor refers to the fugitive character of earthly possessions, what has that to do with Christian humiliation, which does not depend upon either the presence or the absence of wealth? Moreover, St. James says nothing about the fugitiveness of riches: it is the rich man *himself*, and not his wealth, that is said to "pass away," and to "fade away in his goings." Twice over St. James declares this to be the destiny of the rich man; and the wording is such as to show that when the writer says that "the rich man shall fade away in his goings" he means the man, and not his riches. "His goings," or "journeys," very likely refers to his "going into this city to spend a year there, and trade, and get gain" (iv. 13); *i.e.* he wastes himself away in the pursuit of wealth. But what could be the meaning of *wealth* "fading away *in its journeys*"? Evidently, we must not transfer what is said of the rich man himself to his possessions.

It is a baseless assumption to suppose that the rich man here spoken of is a Christian at all. "The brother of low degree" is contrasted, not with the *brother* who is rich, but with the rich man, whose miserable destiny shows that he is not "a brother," *i.e.* not a believer. The latter is the wealthy Jew who rejects Christ. Throughout this Epistle (ii. 6, 7; v. 1-6)

"rich" is a term of reproach. This is what is meant by the Ebionite tone of the Epistle; for poverty is the condition which Ebionism delights to honour. In this St. James seems to be reproducing the thoughts both of Jesus Christ and of Jesus the son of Sirach. "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger" (Luke vi. 25, 26. Comp. Matt. xix. 23-25). "The rich man hath done wrong, and is very wroth besides: the poor man is wronged, and he must intreat also. . . . An abomination to the proud is lowliness; so the poor are abomination to the rich" (Ecclus. xiii. 3, 20).

But when we have arrived at the conclusion that the "being made low" does not refer to the humiliation of the Christian, and that the rich man here threatened with a miserable end is not a believer, a new difficulty arises. What is the meaning of the wealthy unbeliever being told to *glory* in the degradation which is to prove so calamitous to him? In order to avoid this difficulty various expedients have been suggested. Some propose a rather violent change of *mood*—from the imperative to the indicative. No verb is expressed, and it is said that instead of repeating "let him glory" from the previous clause, we may supply "he glories," as a statement of fact rather than an exhortation. The sentence will then run, "But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate; but (δέ) the rich *glorieth* in his being made low;" *i.e.* he glories in what degrades him and ought to inspire him with shame and grief. Others propose a still more violent change, viz. of *verb;* they would keep the imperative, but supply a word of opposite meaning: "so let the rich man *be ashamed* of his being made

low." Neither of these expedients seems to be necessary, or indeed to be a fair treatment of the text.[1] It is quite possible to make good sense of the exhortation, without any violent change either of mood or of verb. In the exhortation to the rich man St. James speaks in severe irony: "Let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate; and the rich man—what is he to glory in?—let him glory in the only thing upon which he can count with certainty, viz. his being brought low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away." Such irony is not uncommon in Scripture. Our blessed Lord Himself makes use of it sometimes, as when He says of the hypocrites that they have their reward, and have it in full (*ἀπέχουσι*: Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16).

Whether or no this interpretation be accepted—and no interpretation of this passage has as yet been suggested which is free from difficulty—it must be clearly borne in mind that no explanation can be correct which does not preserve the connexion between the humiliation of the rich man and his passing away as the flower of the grass. This fading away *is* his humiliation, *is* the thing in which he is to glory, if he glories in anything at all. The inexorable "because" must not be ignored or explained away by making the wealth of the rich man shrivel up, when St. James twice over says that it is the rich man himself who fades away.

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 3, where commanding is understood from forbidding, is not strictly parallel: "forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats." The context is such as to prevent any misunderstanding of the loosely worded sentence. See Moulton's Winer, p. 777; also Bede, who rightly remarks, "Subauditur a superiore versu, *glorietur*. Quod per irrisionem quæ Græce ironia vocatur, dictum esse constat . . . ut humiliatus in æternum pereat cum purpurato illo divite qui Lazarum despexit egentem."

The metaphor here used of the rich man is common enough in the Old Testament. Man "cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down" (ὥσπερ ἄνθος ἀνθῆσαν ἐξέπεσεν LXX.), says Job, in his complaint (xiv. 2); and, "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more," says the Psalmist (ciii. 15, 16). But elsewhere, with a closer similarity to the present passage, we have this transitory character specially attributed to the ungodly, who "shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb" (Ps. xxxvii. 2). None of these passages, however, are so clearly in St. James's mind as the words of Isaiah: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. xl. 6, 7). Here the words of St. James are almost identical with those of the Septuagint (ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν . . . ἐξηράνθη χόρτος, ἐξέπεσεν τὸ ἄνθος); and, as has been already pointed out (p. 59), this is one of the quotations which our Epistle has in common with that of St. Peter (1 Peter i. 24).

"Grass" throughout is a comprehensive term for herbage, and the "flower of grass" does not mean the bloom or blossom of grass in the narrower sense, but the wild flowers, specially abundant and brilliant in the Holy Land, which grow among the grass. Thus, in the Sermon on the Mount, what are first called "the lilies (τὰ κρίνα) of the field" are immediately afterwards called "the grass (τὸν χόρτον) of the field" (Matt. vi. 28, 30).

"The scorching wind" (ὁ καύσων) is one of the features in the Epistle which harmonize well with the fact that the writer was an inhabitant of Palestine. It is the furnace-like blast from the arid wilderness to the east of the Jordan. "Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither when the east wind toucheth it? It shall wither in the beds where it grew" (Ezek. xvii. 10). "God prepared a sultry east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted" (Jonah iv. 8). The fig-tree, olives, and vine (iii. 12) are the chief fruit-trees of Palestine; and "the early and latter rain" (v. 7) points still more clearly to the same district.

It has been remarked with justice that whereas St. Paul for the most part draws his metaphors from the scenes of human activity—building, husbandry, athletic contests, and warfare—St. James prefers to take his metaphors from the *scenes of nature*. In this chapter we have "the surge of the sea" (ver. 6) and "the flower of the grass" (ver. 10). In the third chapter we have the "rough winds" driving the ships, the "wood kindled by a small fire," "the wheel of nature," "every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things, and things in the sea," "the fountain sending forth sweet water," "the fig-tree and vine" (vv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12). In the fourth chapter human life is "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (ver. 14). And in the last chapter, besides the moth and the rust, we have "the fruit of the earth," and "the early and latter rain" (vv. 2, 3, 7, 18).

These instances are certainly very numerous, when the brevity of the Epistle is considered. The love of nature which breathes through them was no doubt learned and cherished in the village home at Nazareth,

and it forms another link between St. James and his Divine Brother. Nearly every one of the natural phenomena to which St. James directs attention in this letter are used by Christ also in His teaching. The surging of the sea (Luke xxi. 25), the flowers of the field (Matt. vi. 28), the burning of wood (John xv. 6), the birds of the air (Matt. vi. 26; viii. 20; xiii. 4, 32), the fountain of sweet water (John iv. 10-14; vii. 38), the fig-tree (Matt. vii. 16; xxi. 19; xxiv. 32), the vine (John xv. 1-5), the moth (Matt. vi. 19), the rust (Matt. vi. 19), and the rain (Matt. v. 45; vii. 25). In some cases the use made by St. James of these natural objects is very similar to that made by our Lord, and it may well be that what he writes is a reminiscence of what he had heard years before from Christ's lips; but in other cases the use is quite different, and must be assigned to the love of nature, and the recognition of its fitness for teaching spiritual truths, which is common to the Lord and His brother. Thus, when St. James asks, "Can a fig-tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs?" we seem to have an echo of the question in the Sermon on the Mount, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" And when St. James tells the rich oppressors that their "garments are moth-eaten; their gold and their silver are rusted," is he not remembering Christ's charge, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust do consume, and where thieves break through and steal"? But in most of the other cases there is little or no resemblance between the similes of Christ and the figurative use of the same natural phenomena made by St. James. Thus, while Jesus uses the flowers of the field to illustrate God's care for every object in the universe, and

the superiority of the glory which He bestows over that with which man adorns himself, St. James teaches thereby the transitory character of the glory which comes of riches; and while Christ points to the rain as illustrating God's bounty to good and bad alike, St. James takes it as an illustration of His goodness in answer to patient and trusting prayer.

It is manifest that in this matter St. James is partly following a great example, but partly also following the bent of his own mind. The first, without the second, would hardly have given us so many examples of this kind of teaching in so small a space. St. John had equal opportunities with St. James of learning this method of teaching from Christ, and yet there are scarcely any examples of it in his Epistles. Possibly his opportunities were even greater than those of St. James; for although he was at most the cousin of the Lord, whereas St. James was His brother, yet he was present during the whole of Christ's ministry, whereas St. James was not converted until after the Resurrection. But there is this great difference between Christ's teaching from nature and that of St. James: St. James recognizes in the order and beauty of the universe a revelation of Divine truth, and makes use of the facts of the external world to teach spiritual lessons; the incarnate Word, in drawing spiritual lessons from the external world, could expound the meaning of a universe which He Himself had made. In the one case it is a disciple of nature who imparts to us the lore which he himself has learned; in the other it is the Master of nature, who points out to us the meaning of His own world, and interprets to us the voices of the winds and the waves, which obey Him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATIONS AND THE REALITY OF SIN. THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE DETERMINIST.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death. Be not deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."—St. James i. 12-18.

AFTER the slight digression respecting the short-lived glory of the rich man, St. James returns once more to the subject with which the letter opens—the blessing of trials and temptations as opportunities of patience, and the blessedness of the man who endures them, and thus earns "the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him." These last words are very interesting as being a record of *some utterance of Christ's not preserved in the Gospels*, of which we have perhaps other traces elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Pet. v. 4; Rev. ii. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 8).[1] They

[1] In the *Acta Philippi, Apocal. Apocr.*, ed. Tischendorf, p. 147, we have, "Blessed is he who hath his raiment white; for he it is who

imply a principle which qualifies what goes before, and leads on to what follows. The mere endurance of temptations and afflictions will not win the promised crown, unless temptations are withstood, and afflictions endured in the right spirit. The proud self-reliance and self-repression of the Stoic has nothing meritorious about it. These trials must be met in a spirit of loving trust in the God who sends or allows them. It is only those who love and trust God who have the right to expect anything from His bounty. This St. James continually insists on. Let not the double-minded man, with his affections and loyalty divided between God and Mammon, "think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (i. 7). God has chosen the poor who are "rich in *faith*" to be "heirs of the kingdom which He promised *to them that love Him*" (ii. 5). And this love of God is quite incompatible with love of the world. "Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God" (iv. 4).

It is the loving withstanding of temptation, then, that wins the crown of life: the mere being tempted tends rather to death. "Lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death." With these facts before him, the loving Christian will never say, when temptations come, that they come from God. It cannot be God's will to seduce him from the path of life to the path of death. The existence of temptations is no just ground of complaint against God. Such complaints are an attempt to shift the blame from himself to his Creator. The temptations proceed, not from God, but from the man's own evil nature; a nature which God created stainless,

receiveth the crown of joy." See A. Resch, *Agrapha; Aussercanonische Evangelien fragmente* (Leipzig, 1889), p. 254.

but which man of his own free will has debased. To tempt is to try to lead astray; and one has only to understand the word in its true sense to see how impossible it is that God should become a tempter. By a simple but telling opposition of words St. James indicates where the blame lies. God "*Himself* tempteth no man (*πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένα*); but each man is tempted when by his *own* lust he is drawn away and enticed" (*ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος*). It is his own evil desire which plays the part of the temptress, drawing him out from his place of safety by the enticement of sinful pleasure.[1] So that the fault is in a sense doubly his. The desire which tempts proceeds from his own evil nature, and the will which consents to the temptress is his own. Throughout the passage St. James represents the evil desire as playing the part of Potiphar's wife. The man who withstands such temptation is winning the promised crown of life; the man who yields has for the offspring of his error death. The one result is in accordance with God's will, as is proved by His promising and bestowing the crown; the other is not, but is the natural and known consequence of the man's own act.

At the present time there is a vehement effort being made in some quarters to shift the blame of man's wrong-doing, if not on to God (and He is commonly left out of the account, as unknown or non-existing), at any rate on to those natural laws which determine phenomena. We are asked to believe that such ideas

[1] The punctuation and order of words in both A.V. and R.V. seem to be faulty: "enticed," quite as much as "drawn away," belongs to "by his own lust." Moreover, the metaphor is not seduction from the right road, but alluring out of security into danger.

as moral freedom and responsibility are mere chimæras, and that the first thing which a reasonable person has to do, in raising himself to a higher level, is to get rid of them. He is to convince himself that character and conduct are the necessarily evolved result of inherited endowments, developed in certain circumstances, over neither of which the man has any control. He did not select the qualities of body and mind which he received from his parents, and he did not make the circumstances in which he has had to live since his birth. He could no more help acting as he did on any given occasion than he could help the size of his heart or the colour of his brain. He is no more responsible for the acts which he produces than a tree is responsible for its leaves. And of all senseless delusions and senseless wastes of power, those which are involved in the feeling of remorse are the worst. In remorse we wring our hands over deeds which we could not possibly have avoided doing, and reproach ourselves for omitting what we could not by any possibility have done. Ethiopians might as reasonably blame themselves for their black skins, or be conscience-stricken for not having golden hair, as any human being feel remorse for what he has done or left undone in the past. Whatever folly a man may have committed, he eclipses it all by the folly of self-reproach.

Positivism will indeed have worked marvels when it has driven remorse out of the world; and until it has succeeded in doing so, it will remain confronted by an unanswerable proof—as universal as the humanity which it professes to worship—that its moral system is based upon a falsehood. Whether or no we admit the belief in a God, the fact of self-reproach in every human heart remains to be accounted for. And it is

a fact of the most enormous proportions. Think of the years of mental agony and moral torture which countless numbers of the human race have endured since man became a living soul, because men have invariably reproached themselves with the folly and wickedness which they have committed. Think of the exquisite suffering which remorse has inflicted on every human being who has reached years of reflexion. Think of the untold misery which the misdeeds of men have inflicted upon those who love and would fain respect them. It may be doubted whether all other forms of human suffering, whether mental or bodily, are more than as a drop in the ocean, compared with the agonies which have been endured through the gnawing pangs of remorse for personal misconduct, and of shame and grief for the misconduct of friends and relations. And if the Determinist is right, all this mental torture, with its myriad stabs and stings through centuries of centuries, is based on a monstrous delusion. These bitter reproachers of themselves and of those dearest to them might have been spared it all, if only they had known that not one of the acts thus blamed and lamented in tears of blood could have been avoided.

Certainly the Positivist, who shuts God out from his consideration, has a difficult problem to solve, when he is asked how he accounts for a delusion so vast, so universal, and so horrible in its consequences; and we do not wonder that he should exhaust all the powers of rhetoric and invective in the attempt to exorcize it. But his difficulty is as nothing compared with the difficulties of a thinker who endeavours to combine Determinism with Theism, and even with Christianity. What sort of a God can He be who has allowed, who

has even ordained, that every human heart should be wrung with this needless, senseless agony? Has any savage, any inquisitor, ever devised torture so diabolical? And what kind of a Saviour and Redeemer can He be who has come from heaven, and returned thither again, without saying one word to free men from their blind, self-inflicted agonies; who, on the contrary, has said many things to confirm them in their delusions? Whence came moral evil and the pangs of remorse, if there is no such thing as free will? They must have been fore-ordained and created by God. The Theist has no escape from that. If God made man free, and man by misusing his freedom brought sin into the world, and remorse as a punishment for sin, then we have *some* explanation of the mystery of evil. God neither willed it nor created it; it was the offspring of a free and rebellious will. But if man was never free, and there is no such thing as sin, then the madman gnawing his own limbs in his frenzy is a reasonable being and a joyous sight, compared with the man who gnaws his own heart in remorse for the deeds which the inexorable laws of his own nature compelled him, and still compel him, to commit.

Is there, or is there not, such a thing as sin? That is the question which lies at the bottom of the error against which St. James warns his readers, and of the doctrines which are advocated at the present time by Positivists and all who deny the reality of human freedom and responsibility. To say that when we are tempted we are tempted by God, or that the Power which brought us into existence has given us no freedom to refuse the evil and to choose the good, is to say that sin is a figment of the human mind, and that a conscious revolt of the human mind against the

power of holiness is impossible. On such a question the appeal to human language, of which Aristotle is so fond, seems to be eminently suitable; and the verdict which it gives is overwhelming. There is probably no language, there is certainly no civilized language, which has no word to express the idea of sin. If sin is an illusion, how came the whole human race to believe in it, and to frame a word to express it?[1] Can we point to any other word in universal, or even very general use, which nevertheless represents a mere chimæra, believed in as real, but actually non-existent? And let us remember that this is no case in which self-interest, which so fatally warps our judgment, can have led the whole human race astray. Self-interest would lead us entirely in the opposite direction. There is no human being who would not enthusiastically welcome the belief that what seem to him to be grievous sins are no more a matter of reproach to him than the beatings of his heart or the winkings of his eyes. Sometimes the conscience-stricken offender, in his efforts to excuse his acts before the judgment-seat of his higher self, tries to believe this. Sometimes the Determinist philosopher endeavours to prove to him that he ought to believe it. But the stern facts of his own nature and the bitter outcome of all human experience are too strong for such attempts. In spite of all specious excuses, and all plausible statements of philosophic difficulties, his conscience and his consciousness compel him to confess, "It was my own lust that enticed me, and my own will that consented."

How serious St. James considers the error of attempting to make God responsible for our temptations is

[1] See R. H. Hutton on *The Service of Man*, in the *Contemporary Review*, April, 1887, p. 492.

shown both by the earnest and affectionate insertion of "Be not deceived,[1] my beloved brethren," and also by the pains which he takes to disprove the error. After having shown the true source of temptation, and explained the way in which sin and death are generated, he points out how incredible it is on other grounds that God should become a tempter. How can the Source of every good gift and every perfect boon[2] be also a source of temptations to sin? How can the Father of lights be one who would lead away His creatures into darkness? If what we know of human nature ought to tell us whence temptations to sin are likely to come, what we know of God's nature and of His dealings with mankind ought to tell us whence such things are *not* likely to come.

And He is far above those heavenly luminaries of which He is the Author. *They* are not always bright, and are therefore very imperfect symbols of His holiness. In their revolutions they are sometimes overshadowed. The moon is not always at the full, the sun is sometimes eclipsed, and the stars suffer changes in like manner. In Him there is no change, no loss of light, no encroachment of shadow. There is never a time at which one could say that through momentary diminution in holiness it had become possible for Him to become a tempter.

Nor are the brightness and beneficence which pervade the material universe the chief proofs of God's goodness

[1] Or, "led astray" (*πλανᾶσθε*). The word implies fundamental departure from the truth (v. 19; John vii. 47; 1 John i. 8; ii. 26; iii. 7; Rev. xviii. 23).

[2] The words form an hexameter in the original, which may be either accidental or a quotation: *πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον* ("Every gift that is good, and every boon that is perfect").

and of the impossibility of temptations to sin proceeding from Him. It was "of His own will" that He rescued mankind from the state of death into which their rebellious wills had brought them, and by a new revelation of Himself in "the Word of truth," *i.e.* the Gospel, brought them forth again, born anew as Christians, to be, like the first-born under the Law, "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."[1]

When, therefore, we sum up all the known facts of the case, there is only one conclusion at which we can justly arrive. There is the nature of God, so far as it is known to us, utterly opposed to evil. There is the nature of man, as it has been debased by himself, constantly bringing forth evil. There is God's goodness, as manifested in the creation of the universe and in the regeneration of man. It is a hopeless case to try to banish remorse by making God responsible for man's temptations and sin.

There is only one way of getting rid of remorse, and that is to confess sin—to confess its reality, to confess it to God, and if need be to man. No man ever yet succeeded in justifying himself by laying the blame of his sins on God. But he may do so by laying the sins themselves upon "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world," and by washing his stained robes, "and making them white in the blood of the Lamb." That done, remorse will have no power over him; and instead of fruitlessly accusing God, and seeking vain substitutes for the service of God, he will humbly "give Him glory," and "serve Him day and night in His temple" (Joshua vii. 19; Rev. vii. 15).

[1] See F. D. Maurice, *Unity of the N. T.* (Parker, 1854), pp. 320-23.

NOTE.—The difficult expression (*τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα*) rendered in the Authorized Version "shadow of turning," and in the Revised "shadow that is cast by turning," has received a great variety of translations and explanations. The Old Latin, *modicum obumbrationis*, like the Greek commentators, makes *ἀποσκίασμα = σκιά* = "shade, trace, small amount." It is doubtful whether the rare compound *ἀποσκίασμα* ever acquired this meaning; but the opinion of Greeks on this point is of great weight, and certainly this meaning makes good sense. The Vulgate, *vicissitudinis obumbratio*, is as difficult as the Greek; and Augustine's *momenti obumbratio* comes from the false reading *ῥοπῆς*. "Shadow cast by turning" does not seem to be very helpful, whether we interpret "turning" to mean the revolutions of the sun or of the earth, or the changes of nature generally. Perhaps the genitive is the genitive of quality, "shadow of change" for "changing shadow;" so Stier and Theil, *wechselnde Beschattung*, and Stolz *abwechselnde Verdunkelung*. Comp. *ἀκροατὴς ἐπιλησμονῆς* (i. 25), and, see the *Expositor*, Sept., 1889, pp. 228-30.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DELUSION OF HEARING WITHOUT DOING. THE MIRROR OF GOD'S WORD.

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing."—ST. JAMES i. 22-25.

HERE we reach what on the whole seems to be the main thought of the Epistle—*the all-importance of Christian activity and service.* The essential thing, without which other things, however good in themselves, become insignificant or worthless, or even mischievous, is *conduct.* Everything else, if not accompanied by practice, by avoiding evil and doing good, is vain. In Bishop Butler's words, religion "does not consist in the knowledge and belief even of fundamental truth," but rather in our being brought "to a certain temper and behaviour;" or as St. John puts it still more simply, only "he who *doeth* righteousness is righteous." Suffering injuries, poverty, and temptations, hearing the Word, teaching the Word, faith, wisdom (i. 2, 9, 12, 19; ii. 14-26; iii. 13-7), are all of them excellent; but if they are not accompanied by a holy life, a life of prayer and gentle words and good deeds, they are valueless.

There are two or three other leading thoughts, but they are all of them subordinated to this main thought of the necessity for Christian conduct as well as Christian belief and wisdom. One of these secondary thoughts has already been noticed more than once—the blessedness of enduring temptations and other trials; it is specially prominent in the first and last chapters (i. 2-4, 12; v. 7-11). Another of the secondary topics which have a prominent place in the letter is the peril of much speaking. It introduces and closes the section which lies immediately before us (i. 19, 26), and it is dwelt upon at length in the third chapter. Yet a third topic which cannot fail to attract the attention of the reader is the preference given to the poor over the rich as regards their spiritual opportunities, and the stern warnings addressed to all those whose wealth leads them to become tyrannical. This subject is specially prominent in the first, second, and last chapters (i. 10, 11; ii. 1-7; v. 1-6). But all these matters are looked at from the point of view of Christian conduct and service. They are not in any one case the idea which binds together the whole Epistle, but they lead up to it and emphasize it. If we were to single out one verse as in a special way summing up the teaching of the whole letter, we could hardly find one more suitable for the purpose than the first of the four which stand at the head of the present chapter: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves." It will be worth while to examine this simple and most practical exhortation somewhat in detail.

It is one of the many sayings in the Epistle which irresistibly remind us of the teaching of Jesus Christ; not as being a quotation from any of His recorded dis-

courses, but as being an independent reproduction of the substance of His conversation by one who was quite familiar with it, but was not familiar with the written Gospels. Had the writer of this letter been well acquainted with any of the four Gospels, he could hardly have escaped being influenced by them, and the echoes of Christ's teaching which we find in its pages would have been more closely in accordance with the reports of His words which they contain. This feature of the Epistle harmonizes well with its being written by the Lord's brother, who must have been very familiar with the Lord's teaching, and who wrote before A.D. 62, *i.e.* at a time when perhaps not one of our Gospels was written, and when certainly none of them can have had a very wide circulation. More will be said upon this point hereafter (p. 308): for the present it suffices to point out the resemblance between this warning against the delusion of thinking that hearing without doing is of any avail, and the warning which closes the Sermon on the Mount: "Every one which heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock. . . . And every one that heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof" (Matt. vii. 24-27).

"Be ye doers of the Word." Both verb and tense are remarkable (γίνεσθε): "*Become* doers of the Word." True Christian practice is a thing of growth; it is a process, and a process which has already begun, and is continually going on. We may compare, "*Become* ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"

(Matt. x. 16); "Therefore *become* ye also ready" (xxiv. 44); and "*Become* not faithless, but believing" (John xx. 27; where see Westcott's note). "Become doers of the Word" is more expressive than "Be doers of the Word," and a good deal more expressive than "Do the Word." A "doer of the Word" (ποιητὴς λόγου) is such by profession and practice; the phrase expresses a habit. But one who merely incidentally performs what is prescribed may be said to "do the Word." By the "Word" is meant what just before has been called the "implanted Word" and the "Word of truth (vv. 21, 18), and what in this passage is also called "the perfect law, the law of liberty" (ver. 25), *i.e.* the Gospel. The parable of the Sower illustrates in detail the meaning of becoming an habitual doer of the implanted Word.

"And not hearers only." The order of the words in the Greek is a little doubtful, the authorities being very much divided; but the balance is in favour of taking "only" closely with "hearers" (μὴ ἀκροαταὶ μόνον rather than μὴ μόνον ἀκροαταί); "Be not such as are mere hearers and nothing more." The word for "hearer" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, excepting in the singularly similar passage in the Epistle to the Romans, which is one of the passages that give support to the theory that either St. Paul had seen this Epistle, or St. James had seen St. Paul's: "Not the hearers (ἀκροαταί) of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified," (Rom. ii. 13; see above, p. 57). The verb (ἀκροάομαι) does not occur in the New Testament; but another cognate substantive (ἀκροατήριον), meaning "a place of hearing," is found in the Acts (xxv. 23). In classical Greek this group of words indicates *attentive* listening, especially in the case of

those who attend the lectures of philosophers and the addresses of public speakers. It is thus used frequently in Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, and Plutarch. It is somewhat too hastily concluded that there is nothing of this kind included either in this passage or in Rom. ii. 13. Possibly that is the very thing to which both St. James and St. Paul allude. St. James, in the address which he made to the so-called Council of Jerusalem, says, "Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath" (Acts xv. 21). The Jews came with great punctiliousness to these weekly gatherings, and listened with much attention to the public reading and exposition of the Law; and too many of them thought that with that the chief part of their duty was performed. This habitual public testimony of respect for the Mosaic Law and the traditional interpretations of it, and this zeal to acquire a knowledge of its contents and an insight into its meaning, was the main portion of what was required of them. This, St. James tells them, is miserably insufficient, whether what they hear be the Law or the Gospel, the Law with or without the illumination of the life of Christ. "Being swift to hear" (ver. 19) and to understand is well, but "apart from works it is barren." It is the habitual practice in striving to *do* what is heard and understood that is of value. "Not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh" is blessed, and "blessed in his doing." To suppose that mere hearing brings a blessing is "deluding your own selves." Bede rightly quotes Rev. i. 3 in illustration: "Blessed are they that hear the words of the prophecy, and *keep* the things which are written therein."

The word here used for deluding (*παραλογιζόμενοι*)

is found nowhere else in the New Testament, excepting in one passage in the Epistle to the Colossians (ii. 4), in which St. Paul warns them against allowing any one to "delude them with persuasiveness of speech." But the word is fairly common both in ordinary Greek and in the Septuagint. Its meaning is to mislead with fallacious reasoning, and the substantive (παραλογισμός) is the Aristotelian term for a fallacy. The word does not necessarily imply that the fallacious reasoning is known to be fallacious by those who employ it. To express that we should rather have the word which is used in 2 Peter i. 16 to characterize "cunningly devised fables" (σεσοφισμένοι μῦθοι). Here we are to understand that the victims of the delusion do not, although they might, see the worthlessness of the reasons upon which their self-contentment is based. It is precisely in this that the danger of their position lies. Self-deceit is the most subtle and fatal deceit. The mere knowledge of the law derived from their attentive listening to it does but increase their evil case, if they do not practise it. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (iv. 17).

The Jews have a saying that the man who hears without practising is like a husbandman who ploughs and sows, but never reaps. Such an illustration, being taken from natural phenomena, would be quite in harmony with the manner of St. James; but he enforces his meaning by employing a far more striking illustration. He who is a hearer and not a doer "is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror." Almost all the words in this sentence are worthy of separate attention.

"Is like unto a *man*" (ἔοικεν ἀνδρί). St. James uses the more definite word, which usually excludes

women, and sometimes boys also. He does not say, "is like unto a *person*" (*ἀνθρώπῳ*), which would have included both sexes and all ages. A somewhat quaint explanation has been suggested by Paes, and adopted as probable elsewhere; viz. that men, as a rule, give only a passing look to themselves in the glass; whereas it is a feminine weakness to be fond of attentive observations. But it is fatal to this suggestion that the word here used for beholding (*κατανοεῖν*) means to fix one's mind upon, and consider attentively. It is the word used in "Consider the ravens," and "Consider the lilies" (Luke xii. 24, 27). Moreover, the Greeks sometimes do what we very frequently do in speaking of the human race; they employ the male sex as representative of both. This usage is found in the New Testament; *e.g.* "The queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with *the men* (*τῶν ἀνδρῶν*) of this generation, and shall condemn them. . . . *The men* (*ἄνδρες*) of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it" (Luke xi. 31, 32). Here it is impossible that the women are not included. And this use of "man" (*ἀνήρ*) in the sense of human being is specially common in St. James. We have it four times in this chapter (vv. 8, 12, 20, 23), and again in the second (ver. 2) and third (ver. 2).

This man, then, attentively studies his natural face in a mirror. The words for "his natural face" literally mean "the face of his birth" (*τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ*), *i.e.* the features with which he was born; and the mirror would be a piece of polished metal, which, however excellent, would not reflect the features with the clearness and fidelity of a modern looking-glass. Hence the necessity for attentive observation, the

result of which is that the man recognizes his own face beyond all question. But what follows? "He beheld himself, and he has gone away, and he straightway forgot what manner of man he was." The perfect tense between two aorists gives a lively simplicity to the narration (*κατενόησεν . . . ἀπελήλυθεν . . . ἐπελάθετο*). This is represented as a common case, though not an invariable one. Most of us know our own features sufficiently well to recognize them in a good representation of them, but do not carry in our minds a very accurate image of them. But what has all this to do with being hearers, and not doers, of the Word?

The spoken or written Word of God is the mirror. When we hear it preached, or study it for ourselves, we can find the reflexion of ourselves in it, our temptations and weaknesses, our failings and sins, the influences of God's Spirit upon us, and the impress of His grace. It is here that we notice one marked difference between the inspiration of the sacred writers and the inspiration of the poet and the dramatist. The latter show us *other people* to the life; Scripture shows us *ourselves.*

"Our mirror is a blessed book,
Where out from each illumined page
We see one glorious image look,
All eyes to dazzle and engage,

The Son of God; and that indeed
We see Him as He is we know,
Since in the same bright glass we read
The very life of things below.

Eye of God's Word, where'er we turn
Ever upon us! thy keen gaze
Can all the depths of sin discern,
Unravel every bosom's maze.

> **Who that has felt thy glance of dread**
> **Thrill through his heart's remotest cells,**
> **About his path, about his bed,**
> **Can doubt what Spirit in thee dwells?"**[1]

Keble's metaphor is somewhat more elaborate than St. James's. He represents the Bible as a mirror, out of which the reflected image of the Son of God looks upon us and reads our inmost selves. St. James supposes that in the mirror we see ourselves reflected. But the thought is the same, that through hearing or reading God's Word our knowledge of our characters is quickened. But does this quickened knowledge last? does it lead to action, or influence our conduct? Too often we leave the church or our study, and the impression produced by the recognition of the features of our own case is obliterated. "We straightway forget what manner of men we are," and the insight which has been granted to us into our own true selves is just one more wasted experience.

But this need not be so, and in some cases a very different result may be noticed. Instead of merely looking attentively for a short time, he may *stoop down and pore over it.* Instead of forthwith going away, he may *continue* in the study of it. And instead of straightway forgetting, he may prove a mindful *doer that worketh.* Thus the three parts of the two pictures are made exactly to balance. The word for "looking into" is an interesting one (*παρακύπτειν*). It indicates bending forward to examine earnestly. It is used of Peter looking into the sepulchre (Luke xxiv. 12, a verse of doubtful genuineness); and of Mary Magdalene doing the same (John xx. 11); and of the angels desiring to look into heavenly mysteries (1 Peter i. 12).

[1] *The Christian Year*, St. Bartholomew's Day.

He who does this recognizes God's Word as being "the perfect law, the law of liberty." The two things are the same. It is when the law is seen to be perfect that it is found to be the law of liberty. So long as the law is not seen in the beauty of its perfection, it is not loved, and men either disobey it or obey it by constraint and unwillingly. It is then a law of bondage. But when its perfection is recognized men long to conform to it; and they obey, not because they must, but because they choose. To do what one likes is freedom, and they like to obey. It is in this way that the moral law of the Gospel becomes "the law of liberty," not by imposing fewer obligations than the moral law of the Jew or of the Gentile, but by infusing into the hearts of those who welcome it a disposition and a desire to obey. Christian liberty is never licence. It is not the relaxation of needful restraints, but the spontaneous acceptance of them as excellent in themselves and beneficial to those who observe them. It is the difference between a code imposed by another, and a constitution voluntarily adopted. To be made to work for one whom one fears is slavery and misery; to choose to work for one whom one loves is freedom and happiness. The Gospel has not abolished the moral law; it has supplied a new and adequate motive for fulfilling it.

"Being not a hearer that forgetteth." Literally, "having become not a hearer of forgetfulness" (*οὐκ ἀκροατὴς ἐπιλησμονῆς γενόμενος*); *i.e.* having by practice come to be a hearer, who is characterized, not by forgetfulness of what he hears, but by attentive performance of it.[1] The unusual word "forgetfulness" occurs

[1] This "characterizing genitive" is not exactly a Hebraism, like "children of wrath," "son of perdition," "son of light," and the

nowhere else in the New Testament, nor in classical Greek; but it is found in Ecclesiasticus (xi. 27), "The affliction of an hour causeth forgetfulness of pleasure;" and this adds a trifle to the evidence that St. James was acquainted with that book (see above, p. 71). "A hearer of forgetfulness" exactly balances, both in form and in thought, "a doer of work;" and this is well brought out by the Revisers, who turn *both* genitives by a relative clause: "a hearer that forgetteth," and "a doer that worketh." The Authorized Version is much less happy: "a forgetful hearer, but a doer of *the* work." There is no article in the Greek, and the translation of one genitive by an adjective, and of the other by a genitive, is unfortunate. "A doer of *work*" (ποιητὴς ἔργου), or "a doer that *worketh*," is an expression that emphasizes just what St. James wishes to emphasize, viz. the necessity of actively practising what is attentively heard. "A doer" would have sufficed, but "a doer that worketh" makes the idea of habitual action still more prominent.

"This man shall be blessed in his doing" (ἐν τῇ ποιήσει). Once more we have a word which is found nowhere else in the New Testament, but occurs in Ecclesiasticus (xix. 20), and with much the same meaning as here: "All wisdom is fear of the Lord; and in all wisdom there is doing of the law" (ποίησις νόμου). The correspondence between the meaning of St. James and the meaning of the son of Sirach is very close. Mere knowledge without performance is of little worth: it is in the doing that a blessing can be found.

The danger against which St. James warns the

like; but the use of the genitive in place of an adjective is more common in Oriental languages, and therefore in Greek which is under Oriental influences. See p. 122.

Jewish Christians of the Dispersion is as pressing now as it was when he wrote. Never was there a time when interest in the Scriptures was more keen or more widely spread, especially among the educated classes; and never was there a time when greater facilities for gratifying this interest abounded. Commentaries, expositions, criticisms, introductions, helps of all kinds, exegetical, homiletic, historical, and textual, suitable both for learned and unlearned students, multiply year by year. But it is much to be feared that with many of us the interest in the sacred writings which is thus roused and fostered remains to a very large extent a literary interest. We are much more eager to know all *about* God's Word than from it to learn His will respecting ourselves, that we may do it; to prove that a book is genuine than to practise what it enjoins. We study Lives of Christ, but we do not follow the life of Christ. We pay Him the empty homage of an intellectual interest in His words and works, but we do not the things which He says. We throng and press Him in our curiosity, but we obtain no blessing, because in all our hearing and learning there is no true wisdom, no fear of the Lord, and no doing of His Word.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ST. JAMES. THE PRACTICAL UNBELIEF INVOLVED IN SHOWING A WORLDLY RESPECT OF PERSONS IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

"My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; are ye not divided in your own mind, and become judges with evil thoughts?"—ST. JAMES ii. 1-4.

AS has been stated already, in a previous chapter (p. 23), one of Luther's main objections to this Epistle is that it does not "preach and urge Christ." "It teaches Christian people, and yet does not once notice the Passion, the Resurrection, the Spirit of Christ. The writer names Christ a few times; but he teaches nothing of Him, but speaks of general faith in God."

This indictment has been more fully drawn out by a modern writer. "The author's stand-point is Jewish rather than Christian. The ideas are cast in a Jewish mould. The very name of Christ occurs but twice (i. 1; ii. 1), and His atonement is scarcely touched. We see little more than the threshold of the new system. It is the teaching of a Christian Jew, rather than of one who had reached a true apprehension of

the essence of Christ's religion. The doctrinal development is imperfect. It is only necessary to read the entire Epistle to perceive the truth of these remarks. In warning his readers against transgression of the law by partiality to individuals, the author adduces Jewish rather than Christian motives (ii. 8-13). The greater part of the third chapter, respecting the government of the tongue, is of the same character, in which Christ's example is not once alluded to, the illustrations being taken from objects in nature. The warning against uncharitable judgment does not refer to Christ, or to God, who puts His Spirit in the hearts of believers, but to the law (iv. 10-12). He who judges his neighbour judges the law. The exhortation to feel and act under constant remembrance of the dependence of our life on God belongs to the same category (iv. 13-17). He that knows good without doing it is earnestly admonished to practise virtue and to avoid self-security, without reference to motives connected with redemption. Job and the Prophets are quoted as examples of patience, not Christ; and the efficacy of prayer is proved by the instance of Elias, without allusion to the Redeemer's promise (v. 17). The Epistle is wound up after the same Jewish fashion, though the opportunity of mentioning Christ, who gave Himself a Sacrifice for sin, presented itself naturally."[1]

All this may be admitted, without at all consenting to the conclusion which is drawn from it. Several other considerations must be taken into account before we can form a satisfactory opinion respecting the whole case. Few things are more misleading, in the interpretation of Scripture, than the insisting upon one set of

[1] Davidson, *Introduction to the Study of the N. T.* vol. i. pp. 327, 328, 2nd ed. (Longmans, 1882).

facts and texts, and passing over all that is to be found on the other side. In this manner the most opposite views may be equally proved from Scripture. Universalism and the eschatology of Calvin, Pelagianism and Fatalism, Papalism and Presbyterianism.

First, both logically and chronologically the teaching of St. James precedes that of St. Paul and of St. John. To call it "retrograde" when compared with either of them is to call a child retrograde when compared with a man. St. Paul had to feed his converts with milk before he fed them with meat, and the whole of the congregations addressed by St. James in this letter must have been at a comparatively early stage of development. In some respects even the Mother Church of Jerusalem, from which his letter was written, did not get beyond these early stages. Before it had done so the centre of Christendom had moved from Jerusalem to Antioch; and to Jerusalem it never returned. It was useless to build a structure of doctrine before a foundation of morality had been laid. Advent must come before Christmas, and Lent before Easter. The manifold significance of the great truths of the Incarnation and the Resurrection would not be well appreciated by those who were neglecting some of the plainest principles of the moral law; and to appeal to the sanctions which every Jew from his childhood had been accustomed to regard as final was probably in the long-run more convincing than to remind these converts of the additional sanctions which they had admitted when they entered the Christian Church. Moreover, there are passages in the Epistle which seem to show that St. James at times looks aside to address Jews who are not Christians at all, and it may be that even when He addresses Christian converts he deliberately

prefers arguments which would weigh with Jew and Christian alike to those which would appeal to the latter only. Like St. Paul himself, he was willing to become to the Jews a Jew, that he might win the Jews. Besides which, we must allow something for the bias of his own mind. To his death he remained in many respects, not only a saintly shepherd of the Christian Church, but also a Hebrew of Hebrews. He is the last Jewish prophet as well as the first Christian bishop, a Hebrew Rabbi inside the Church; and even if the condition of his readers had not made it desirable to lay much stress upon the Law and the Old Testament, the associations of a lifetime would have led him frequently to those old sources of truth and morality, all the more so as no authoritative Christian literature was as yet in existence. It was part of his mission to help in creating such a literature. He sets one of the first, it may be the very first, of the mystic stones, which, although apparently thrown together without order or connexion, form so harmonious and so complete a whole; and alike in the solidity of its material and in the simplicity of its form this Epistle is well fitted to be one of the first stones in such a building.

But it is easy to go away with an exaggerated view of the so-called deficiencies of this letter as regards distinctly Christian teaching. The passage before us is a strong piece of evidence, and even if it stood alone it would carry us a long way. Moreover, the strength of it is not much affected by the ambiguity of construction which confronts us in the original. It is impossible to say with absolute certainty how the genitive "of glory" (τῆς δόξης) ought to be taken; but the Revisers are possibly right: "Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, (the Lord) of glory, with

respect of persons."[1] Nor does it much matter whether we take the Greek negative (μὴ . . . ἔχετε) as an imperative, "Do not go on holding;" or as an interrogative which expects a negative reply, "Do ye hold?" In any case we have the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and the fact of His being an object of faith to Christians, placed before us in clear language. No mere Jew, and no Ebionite who believed that Jesus was a mere man, could have written thus. And the words with which the Epistle opens are scarcely less marked: "James, of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ a bond-servant." In both passages the title "Lord," which in the Old Testament means Jehovah, is given to Jesus Christ, and in the opening words God and the Lord Jesus are placed side by side as equal. Moreover, St. James, who might have claimed honour as the brother of the Lord, prefers to style himself His bond-servant. He has "known Christ after the flesh," few more closely and intimately, and he knows from experience how little such knowledge avails: "henceforth knows he Him so no more." He who does the will of God is the true brother of the Lord, and it is this kind of relationship to Christ that he wishes to secure for his readers.

Nor do these two passages, in which Jesus Christ is mentioned by name, stand alone. There is the question, "Do not they blaspheme the honourable Name by which ye were called?" The honourable Name, which had been "called upon" them, is that of

[1] There is, however, a good deal to be said for Bengel's suggestion, that τῆς δόξης is in apposition with τοῦ κυρίου ἡμ. Ἰ. Χριστοῦ, *i.e.* "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, (who is) the Glory." Comp. Luke ii. 32; Eph. i. 7; 1 Peter iv. 14; 2 Peter i. 17; Col. i. 27; John i. 14. See J. B. Mayor's note in the *Expositor*, Sept., 1889, pp. 225-28.

Christ, and if it can be blasphemed it is a Divine Name (ii. 7). The Second Advent of Christ, "the coming of the Lord," is a thing for which Christians are to wait patiently and longingly (v. 7-9), and the office which He will then discharge is that of the Divine Judge of all mankind. "The coming of the Lord is at hand. Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the Judge standeth before the doors" (v. 8, 9).

Nor have we yet exhausted the passages which in this singularly practical and undoctrinal Epistle point clearly to the central doctrine of the Divinity of Christ and His eternal relation to His Church. "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (v. 14, 15). As in the case of the man healed at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple (Acts iii. 6, 16) it is "in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, . . . whom God raised from the dead, even in this Name," that the sick man is to be restored. And some interpreters (Dorner and Von Soden) think that Christ is included, or even exclusively intended, in "One is the Lawgiver and the Judge" (iv. 12. Comp. v. 9). Thus Liddon: "Especially noteworthy is his assertion that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of men, is not the delegated representative of an absent Majesty, but is Himself the Legislator enforcing His own laws. The Lawgiver, he says, is One Being with the Judge who can save and can destroy; the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven, has enacted the law which He thus administers."[1] But without taking into

[1] *Bampton Lectures*, Lect. VI., p. 433 (Rivingtons, *1867*).

account expressions of which the interpretation is open to doubt, there is quite enough to show us that the Divinity of Jesus Christ, His redeeming death, His abiding power, and His return to judgment are the basis of the moral teaching of St. James, and are never long absent from his thoughts. Expressions, some of which no mere Jew or Ebionite could have used, and others which no such imperfect believer would have been likely to use, abound in this short Epistle, in spite of its simple and practical character.[1]

"My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." These words open a new section of the letter, as the renewed address indicates; and although the Epistle is not a set treatise, capable of analysis, but a letter, in which the subjects to be treated are loosely strung together in the order in which they occur to the writer, yet the connexion between the two very different subjects of this section and the preceding one can be traced. The previous section teaches that much hearing is better than much talking, and that much hearing is worthless without corresponding conduct. This section denounces undue respect of persons, and especially of wealthy persons during public worship. The connecting thoughts are religious worship and the treatment of the poor. The conduct which is true devotion is practical benevolence, moral purity, and unworldliness. This conclusion suggests a new subject, worldly respect of persons in public worship. That is the very reverse of pure devotion. To *profess*

[1] Among these should be included the phrases which St. James uses to indicate the Gospel revelation: "the Word of truth" (i. 18); 'the implanted Word" (i. 21); "the perfect law, the law of liberty" (i. 25); "the royal law" (ii. 8).

one's belief in Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, and at the same time *show* one's belief in the majesty of mere money, is grievously incongruous. St. James is not making any attack on differences of rank, or asserting that no man is to be honoured above another. He is pointing out that reverence for the wealthy is no part of Christianity, and that such reverence is peculiarly out of place in the house of God, especially when it brings with it a corresponding disregard of the poor.

"If there come into your *synagogue*." This is one of several improvements which the Revisers have introduced into this passage. The Authorized Version has "assembly," which obscures the fact that the letter is written in those very early days of the Church in which the Jewish Christians still attended the worship of the Temple and the synagogue, or if they had a separate place of worship, spoke of it under the old familiar name. The latter is probably what is meant here. St. James, in writing to Christians, would hardly speak of a Jewish place of worship as "*your* synagogue," nor would he have rebuked Christians for the way in which different persons were treated in a synagogue of the Jews. The supposition that "the article (*τὴν συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν*) indicates that the *one* synagogue of the entire Jewish Christian Dispersion is meant, *i.e.* their religious community symbolically described by the name of the Jewish place of worship," is quite unfounded, and against the whole context. A typical incident—perhaps something which had actually been witnessed by St. James, or had been reported to him—is made the vehicle of a general principle (comp. i. 11). That the reference is to judicial courts often held in synagogues is also quite gratuitous, and

destroys the contrast between "pure religion" and worldly respect of persons in public worship.

Another improvement introduced by the Revisers is a uniform translation of the word (ἐσθής) capriciously rendered "apparel," "raiment," and "clothing." Only one word is used in the Greek, and it is misleading to use three different words in English. By a quaint misuse of the very passage before us, the translators of 1611 defend their want of precision in such matters, and avow that in many cases precision was deliberately sacrificed to variety and to a wish to honour as many English words as possible by giving them a place in the Bible! In ordinary copies of the Authorized Version the Address to King James is commonly given, the far more instructive Address to the Reader never. Near the close of it the translators say as follows :—

"Another thing we think good to admonish thee of (gentle Reader) that we have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish we had done, because they observe, that some learned men some where, have been as exact as they could that way. Truly, that we might not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified the same thing in both places (for there be some words that be not of the same sense every where) we were especially careful, and made a conscience, according to our duty. But, that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, if we translate the *Hebrew* or *Greek* word once by *Purpose*, never to call it *Intent;* if one where *Journeying*, never *Travelling;* if one where *Think*, never *Suppose;* if one where *Pain*, never *Ache;* if one where *Joy*, never *Gladness*, etc. Thus to mince the matter, we thought to savour more of

curiosity than wisdom, and that rather it would breed scorn in the Atheist, than bring profit to the godly Reader. For is the kingdom of God become words or syllables? why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely, when we may use another no less fit, as commodiously? A godly Father in the primitive time shewed himself greatly moved, that one of new-fangleness called *κράββατον σκίμπους*, though the difference be little or none (Niceph. Call. viii. 42); and another reporteth, that he was much abused for turning *Cucurbita* (to which reading the people had been used) into *Hedera* (Jerome *in iv. Jonæ.* See S. Augustine, *Epist.* 71). Now if this happen in better times, and upon so small occasions, we might justly fear hard censure, if generally we should make verbal and unnecessary changings. We might also be charged (by scoffers) with some unequal dealing towards a great number of good English words. For as it is written of a certain great Philosopher, that he should say, that those logs were happy that were made images to be worshipped; for their fellows, as good as they, lay for blocks behind the fire: so if we should say, as it were, unto certain words, Stand up higher, have a place in the Bible always, and to others of a like quality, Get ye hence, be banished for ever, we might be taxed peradventure with S. James his words, namely, *To be partial in our selves and judges of evil thoughts.*"[1]

In the passage before us the repetition of one and

[1] From the *Exact Reprint Page for Page of the A.V. published in the Year MDCXI.* (Oxford, 1833). See also Trench *On the A.V. of the N. T.*, pp. 83-101, and Lightfoot *On a Fresh Revision of the N. T.*, pp. 33-59, for some excellent remarks on the harm done by making differences in the English where there is no difference in the Greek. In the present passage, besides the threefold translation of *ἐσθής*, there is a double translation of *λαμπρός* ("*goodly* apparel" and "*gay*

the same word for "clothing" is possibly not accidental. The repetition accentuates the fact that such a thing as clothing is allowed to be the measure of a man's merit. The rich man is neither the better nor the worse for his fine clothes, the poor man neither the better nor the worse for his shabby clothes. The error lies in supposing that such distinctions have anything to do with religion, or ought to be recognized in public worship; and still more in supposing that any one, whether rich or poor, may at such a time be treated with contumely.

"Are ye not divided in your own mind, and become judges with evil thoughts?" Here, as in the first verse, there is a doubt whether the sentence is an interrogation or not. In the former case the meaning is the same, whichever way we take it; for a question which implies a negative answer (μή interrogative) is equivalent to a prohibition. In the present case the meaning will be affected if we consider the sentence to be a statement of fact, and the number of translations which have been suggested is very large. In both cases we may safely follow the Vulgate and *all* English versions in making the first verse a prohibition, and the fourth a question. "Are ye not divided in your own mind?" Or more literally, "Did ye not doubt in yourselves?" *i.e.* on the typical occasion mentioned. At the outset St. James says, "Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons." But the conduct described respecting the treatment of the gold-ringed man and the squalidly clothed man shows

clothing"), and also of εἰσέλθῃ ("come" and "come in"). In 1 John ii. 24 we have the same word (μένειν) translated in three different ways ("abide," "remain," "continue") in the same verse, entirely destroying the effect of St. John's impressive repetition.

that they do have respect of persons in their religion, and that shows that genuine faith in Christ is wanting. Such behaviour proves that they *doubt* in themselves. They are not single-hearted believers in the Lord Jesus, but double-minded doubters (i. 6, 7), trying to make the best of both worlds, and to serve God and Mammon.

The word rendered "doubt" (*διακρίνεσθαι*) *may* mean "distinguish:" "Do ye not make distinctions among yourselves?" It is so taken by Renan (*L'Antechrist*, p. 49) and others. This makes sense, but it is rather obvious sense; for of course to give a rich man a good place, and a poor man a bad one, is making distinctions. It seems better to adhere to the meaning which the word certainly has in the preceding chapter (i. 6), as well as elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt. xxi. 21; Mark xi. 23; Acts x. 20; Rom. iv. 20; xiv. 23), and understand it as referring to the want of faith in Christ and in His teaching which was displayed in a worldly preference for the rich over the poor, even in those services in which His words were to be taught and His person adored.

"Judges *with* evil thoughts" is an improvement on the more literal but misleading "judges *of* evil thoughts" (*κριταὶ διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν*). The meaning of the genitive case is that the evil thoughts *characterize* the judges, as in such common phrases as "men *of* evil habits," "judges *of* remarkable severity" (see above on "hearers of forgetfulness," p. 108). The word for "thoughts" is one which in itself suggests evil, even without any epithet. It is the word used of the reasonings of the Pharisees, when they taxed our Lord with blasphemy for forgiving sins (Luke v. 22. Comp. xxiv. 38). St. Paul uses it of those who are "vain in their

reasonings" (Rom. i. 21; 1 Cor. iii. 20), and couples with it "murmurings" (Phil. ii. 14) as congenial company. Those men who, even while engaged in the public worship of God, set themselves up as judges to honour the rich and contemn the poor, were not holding the faith of Jesus Christ, but were full of evil doubts, questionings, and distrust.

CHAPTER XI.

THE INIQUITY OF RESPECTING THE RICH AND DESPISING THE POOR.
THE SOLIDARITY OF THE DIVINE LAW.

"Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to them that love Him? But ye have dishonoured the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme the honourable Name by the which ye are called? Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all."—St. James ii. 5-10.

ST. JAMES is varied in his style. Sometimes he writes short, maxim-like sentences, which remind us of the Book of Proverbs; sometimes, as in the passage before us, he is as argumentative as St. Paul. Having condemned worldly respect of persons as practical infidelity, he proceeds to prove the justice of this estimate; and he does so with regard to both items of the account: these respecters of persons are utterly wrong, both in their treatment of the poor and in their treatment of the rich. The former is the worse of the two; for it is in flat contradiction of the Divine decree, and is an attempt to reverse it. God has said one thing about the poor man's estate, and these time-servers, publicly in the house of God, say another.

"Hearken, my beloved brethren." He invites their attention to an affectionate and conclusive statement of the case. "Did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom? But *ye* have dishonoured the poor man." By the humble life which, by Divine decree, God's Son led upon the earth, by the social position of the men whom He chose as His Apostles and first disciples, by blessings promised to the poor and to the friends of the poor, both under the Law and under the Gospel, God has declared His special approbation of the poor man's estate. "But *ye*" (ὑμεῖς δέ, with great emphasis on the pronoun) "have dishonoured the poor man." With Haman-like impiety ye would disgrace "the man whom the King delights to honour."

Let us not misunderstand St. James. He does not say or imply that the poor man is promised salvation on account of his poverty, or that his poverty is in any way meritorious. That is not the case, any more than that the wealth of the rich is a sin. But so far as God has declared any preference, it is for the poor, rather than for the rich. The poor man has fewer temptations, and he is more likely to live according to God's will, and to win the blessings that are in store for those who love Him. His dependence upon God for the means of life is perpetually brought home to him, and he is spared the peril of trusting in riches, which is so terrible a snare to the wealthy. He has greater opportunities of the virtues which make man Christlike, and fewer occasions of falling into those sins which separate him most fatally from Christ. But opportunities are not virtues, and poverty is not salvation. Nevertheless, to a Christian a poor man is an object of reverence, rather than of contempt.

But the error of the worldly Christians whom St. James is here rebuking does not end with dishonouring the poor whom God has honoured; they also pay special respect to the rich. Have the rich, as a class, shown that they deserve anything of the kind? Very much the reverse, as experience is constantly proving. "Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme the honourable Name by the which ye are called?" Unless we consider the "synagogue" mentioned above to be a Jewish one, in which Christians still worship, as in the Temple at Jerusalem, the gold-ringed worshipper is to be understood as a Christian; and reasons have been given above (p. 118) for believing that the "synagogue" is a Christian place of worship. But in any case the rich oppressors here spoken of are not to be thought of as exclusively or principally Christian. They are the wealthy as a class, whether converts to Christianity or not; and apparently, as in chap. v. 1-6, it is the wealthy unbelieving Jews who are principally in the writer's mind. St. James is thinking of the rich Sadducees, who at this period (A.D. 35-65) were among the worst oppressors of the poorer Jews, and of course were specially bitter against those who had become adherents of "the Way," and who seemed to them to be renegades from the faith of their forefathers. It was precisely to this kind of oppression that St. Paul devoted himself with fanatical zeal previous to his conversion (Acts ix. 1, 2; 1 Tim. i. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 9; Phil. iii. 6).

"The judgment-seats" before which these wealthy Jews drag their poorer brethren may be either heathen or Jewish courts (comp. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 4), but are probably the Jewish courts frequently held in the

synagogues. The Roman government allowed the Jews very considerable powers of jurisdiction over their own people, not only in purely ecclesiastical matters, but in civil matters as well. The Mosaic Law penetrated into almost all the relations of life, and where it was concerned it was intolerable to a Jew to be tried by heathen law. Consequently the Romans found that their control over the Jews was more secure, and less provocative of rebellion, when the Jews were permitted to retain a large measure of self-government. This applied not only to Palestine, but to all places in which there were large settlements of Jews. Even in the New Testament we find ample evidence of this. The high priest grants Saul "letters to *Damascus*, unto the synagogues," to arrest all who had become converts to "the Way" (Acts ix. 2). And St. Paul before Herod Agrippa II. declares that, in his fury against converts to Christianity, he "persecuted them even unto *foreign* cities" (Acts xxvi. 11). Most, if not all, of the five occasions on which he himself "received of the Jews forty stripes save one" (2 Cor. xi. 24) must have been during his travels outside Palestine. The proconsul Gallio told the Jews of Corinth, not only that they might, but that they must, take their charges against Paul, for breaking Jewish law, to a Jewish tribunal; and when they ostentatiously beat Sosthenes before his own tribunal, for some Jewish offence, he abstained from interfering. It is likely enough that provincial governors, partly from policy, partly from indifference, allowed Jewish officials to exercise more power than they legally possessed; but they possessed quite enough to enable them to handle severely those who contravened the letter or the traditional interpretation of the Mosaic Law. That the dragging before

the judgment-seats refers to bringing Christians before Roman magistrates, in a time of persecution, is a gratuitous hypothesis which does not fit the context. It was the mob, rather than the rich, that in the earlier persecutions acted in this way. The rich were contemptuously indifferent. There is, therefore, no evidence here that the letter was written during the persecution under Domitian or under Trajan. Nevertheless, their Christianity, rather than their debt, was probably the reason why these poor Jewish Christians were prosecuted in the synagogue courts by the wealthy Jews.

So far from this passage being evidence that the Epistle was written at a time long after the death of St. James, it is, as Renan has carefully shown, almost a proof that it was written during his lifetime. As regards the relations between rich and poor, "the Epistle of James is a perfect picture of the Ebionim at Jerusalem in the years which preceded the revolt." The destruction of Jerusalem "introduced so complete a change into the situation of Judaism and of Christianity, that it is easy to distinguish a writing subsequent to the catastrophe of the year 70 from a writing contemporary with the third Temple. Pictures evidently referring to the internal contests between the different classes in Jerusalem society, such as that which is presented to us in the Epistle of James, are inconceivable after the revolt of the year 66, which put an end to the reign of the Sadducees."[1] These were the times when women bought the priesthood for their husbands from Herod Agrippa II., and went to see them officiate, over carpets spread from their own door to the Temple; when wealthy priests were too

[1] *L'Antechrist*, pp. xi.-xiii., 49-54.

fastidious to kill the victims for sacrifice without first putting on silk gloves; when their kitchens were furnished with every appliance for luxurious living, and their tables with every delicacy; and when, supported by the Romans, to whom they truckled, they made war upon the poor priests, who were supported by the people. Like Hophni and Phinehas, they sent out their servants to collect what they claimed as offerings, and if payment was refused the servants took what they claimed by force. Facts like these help us to understand the strong language used here by St. James, and the still sterner words at the beginning of the fifth chapter. In such a state of society the mere possession of wealth certainly established no claims upon the reverence of a Christian congregation; and the fawning upon rich people, degrading and unchristian at all times, would seem to St. James to be specially perilous and distressing then.

"Do not they blaspheme the honourable Name by which ye are called?" The last clause literally means "which was called upon you" (*τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς*); and we need not doubt that the reference is to the Name of Christ which was invoked upon them at their baptism; *quod invocatum est super vos*, as the Vulgate has it. The same expression is found in the Septuagint of those who are called by God's Name (2 Chron. vii. 14; Jer. xiv. 9; xv. 16; Amos ix. 12). Some have suggested that the name here indicated is that of "poor," or of "brethren," or of "Christian;" but none of these is at all probable. It may be doubted whether the last was already in common use; and "blaspheme" would be a very strong expression to use of any of them; whereas both it and "honourable" are quite in keeping if the name be that of Christ. The word

rendered "honourable" (*καλόν*) cannot be adequately translated. It is the same as that which is rendered "good" when we read of "the *Good* Shepherd" (John x. 11). It suggests what is beautiful, noble, and good, as opposed to what is foul, mean, and wicked; and such is the Name of Christ, which is called in a special sense "*the* Name" (Acts v. 41; 3 John 7. Comp. Ignatius, *Eph.* iii., vii.; *Philad.* x.; Clem. Rom. ii., xiii.). That the blasphemers are not Christians is shown by the clause "which was called upon *you*." Had Christians been intended, St. James would have written "Do not they blaspheme the honourable Name which was called upon *them?*" That they blasphemed the Name in which they were baptized would have been such an aggravation of their offence that he would not have failed to indicate it. These blasphemers were no doubt Jews; and St. James has in his mind the anathemas against Jesus Christ which were frequent utterances among the Jews, both in the synagogues and in conversation. St. Paul alludes to these when he says, "No man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema;" and Justin Martyr writes, "That which is said in the Law, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, confirms our hope which is hung upon the crucified Christ, not as if God were cursing that crucified One, but because God foretold that which would be done by all of you (Jews) and those like you. . . . And you may see with your eyes this very thing coming to pass; for in your synagogues you curse all those who from Him have become Christians" (*Trypho*, xcvi.). The text, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," was a favourite one with the Jews in their controversies with Christians, as St. James would know well (see Gal. iii. 13); and all this tends

to show that he refers to literal blasphemy by word of mouth, and not to the virtual blasphemy which is involved in conduct that dishonours Christ.

His argument, therefore, amounts to this, that the practice of honouring the rich for their riches is (quite independently of any dishonour done to the poor) doubly reprehensible. It involves the meanness of flattering their own oppressors, and the wickedness of reverencing those who blaspheme Christ. It is a servile surrender of their own rights, and base disloyalty to their Lord.

But perhaps (the argument continues) some will defend this respect paid to the rich as being no disloyalty to Christ, but, on the contrary, simple fulfilment of the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Be it so, that the rich as a class are unworthy of respect and honour, yet nevertheless they are our neighbours, and no misconduct on their side can cancel the obligation on our side to treat them as we should wish to be treated ourselves. We ourselves like to be respected and honoured, and therefore we pay respect and honour to them. To those who argue thus the reply is easy. Certainly, if that is your motive, ye do well. But why do you love your neighbour as yourselves if he chances to be rich, and treat him like a dog if he chances to be poor? However excellent your reasons for honouring the wealthy may be, you still do not free yourselves from the blame of showing an unchristian respect of persons, and therefore of committing sin, "being convicted by the law as transgressors."

The law of loving one's neighbour as oneself is a "royal law," not as having emanated from God or from Christ as King, still less as being a law which binds

even kings, or which makes kings of those who observe it. It is a royal law, as being sovereign over other laws, inasmuch as it is one of those two on which "hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. xxii. 40). Indeed, either of the two may be interpreted so as to cover the whole duty of man. Thus St. Paul says of this royal law, "The whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. v. 14). And St. John teaches the same truth in a different way, when he declares that "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John iv. 20). The expression "royal law" occurs nowhere else, either in the New Testament or in the Septuagint, but it is found in a dialogue entitled Minos (p. 317), which is sometimes wrongly attributed to Plato. It is one which might readily occur to any one as a name for a supreme moral principle.

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all."[1] The law is the expression of one and the same principle—love; and of one and the same will—the will of God. Therefore he who deliberately offends against any one of its enactments, however diligently he may keep all the rest, is guilty of offending against the whole. His guiding principle is not love, but selfishness—not God's will, but his own. He keeps nine tenths of the law because he likes to do so, and he breaks one tenth because he likes to do so. The fact of his wilful disobedience proves that his obedience is not the fruit of

[1] This text caused St. Augustine much perplexity. He sent a long discussion of it to Jerome, asking for his opinion. Augustine's solution is that the whole law hangs on the love of God, and that every transgression is a breach of love (*Ep.* CLXVII. iv. 16).

love or loyalty, but of self-seeking. If we ask what his character is, the answer must be, "He is a law-breaker." These respecters of persons claimed to be observers of the law, because they treated their rich neighbours as they would have liked to be treated themselves. St. James shows them that, on the contrary, they are transgressors of the law, because they pick and choose as to what neighbours shall be treated thus kindly. They keep the law when it is convenient to keep it, and break it when it is inconvenient to keep it. Such keeping of the law is in its essence, not obedience, but disobedience. He who follows honesty only because honesty is the best policy is not an honest man, and he who obeys the law only because obedience suits him is not an obedient man. There is no serving God with reservations. However small the reservation may be, it vitiates all the rest. In order to "*fulfil* the law" (a rare expression, found only here and in Rom. ii. 27), we must keep it all round, independently of our own likes and dislikes.

St. James is not here countenancing the severity of Draco, that small crimes deserve death, and that there is no worse punishment for great crimes; nor yet the paradox of the Stoics, that the theft of a penny is as bad as parricide, because in either case the path of virtue is left, and one is drowned as surely in seven feet of water as in seventy fathoms. He is not contending that all sins are equal, and that to break one of God's commands is as bad as to break them all. What he maintains is that no one can claim to be a fulfiller of the law in virtue of his extensive obedience so long as there is any portion of the law which he wilfully disobeys. Why does he disobey in this? Because it pleases him to do so. Then he would

disobey in the rest if it pleased him to do so. The motive of his conduct is not submission, but self-will. He is in character "a transgressor of the law."

Both defects are common enough still, and are likely to remain so. Paying respect to *persons*, *dignities*, and *positions* is a frequent form of meanness, especially in the manner here condemned, of courting the rich and slighting the poor. It is a Christian duty to respect the rank or the office of those whom God has placed in a position superior to ourselves, and it is also a Christian duty to reverence those who by God's grace are leading lives of virtue and holiness; but it is unchristian partiality to honour a man merely for his wealth, or to dishonour him merely for his poverty. And secondly, we are all of us prone to plead, both before the world and our own consciences, the particulars in which we do *not* offend as a set-off against those in which we *do*. To detect ourselves thus balancing a transgression here, against many observances there, ought at once to startle us into the conviction that the whole principle of our lives must be faulty. Our aim is, not to love God, or to obey Him, but to get to heaven, or at least to escape hell, *on the cheapest terms.*

CHAPTER XII.

FAITH AND WORKS: THREE VIEWS OF THE RELATION OF THE TEACHING OF ST. JAMES TO THE TEACHING OF ST. PAUL. THE RELATION OF LUTHER TO BOTH.

"What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith. Thou believest that God is One; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and shudder. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."—St. James ii. 14-26.

THIS famous passage has been quoted in full, because one needs to have the whole of it before one in order to appreciate the value of the arguments used on this side and on that as to its relation to the teaching of St. Paul on the connexion between faith and works; for which purpose mere extracts will not

do; and also because considerable changes, some of them important, have been made throughout the passage by the Revisers, and these will influence the impression derived from reading the passage as a whole.

It might be thought that here, at any rate, we have got, in this singularly practical and undogmatic Epistle, a paragraph which is, both in intention and in effect, distinctly doctrinal. It seems at first sight to be a careful exposition of St. James's views as to the nature and value of faith and its relation to conduct. But a little attention will prove to us that throughout the passage St. James is as practical in his aim as in any part of the letter, and that whatever doctrinal teaching there may be in the passage is there because the practical purpose of the writer could not be fulfilled without involving doctrine, and not at all because the writer's object is to expound or defend an article of the Christian faith. He has *agenda* rather than *credenda* in his mind. An orthodox creed is assumed throughout. What needs to be produced is not right belief, but right action.

In this affectionate pastoral St. James passes in review the defects which he knows to exist in his readers. They have their good points, but these are sadly marred by corresponding deficiencies. They are swift to hear, but also swift to speak and slow to act. They believe in Jesus Christ; but they dishonour Him by dishonouring His poor, while they profess to keep the law of charity by honouring the rich. They are orthodox in a Monotheistic creed; but they rest content with that, and their orthodoxy is as barren as a dead tree. It is with this last defect that St. James is dealing in the passage before us. And as so often

(i. 12, 19; ii. 1; iii. 1, 13; iv. 1, 13; v. 1, 7, 13), he clearly states his main point first, and then proceeds to enforce and elucidate it.

"What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him?" "*That* faith" is literally "*the* faith," or "*his* faith;" viz. such faith as he professes, a faith that produces nothing. There is no emphasis on "say." St. James is not insinuating that the man says he has faith, when he really has none. If that were the case, it would be needless to ask, "Can his faith save him?" The question then would be, "Can his *profession* of faith save him?" But St. James nowhere throws doubt on the truth of the unprofitable believer's professions, or on the possibility of believing much and doing nothing. Why, then, does he put in the "say"? Why not write, "If a man have faith"? Perhaps in order to indicate that in such cases the man's own statement is all the evidence there is that he has faith. In the case of other Christians their works prove them to be believers; but where there are no works you can only have the man's word for it that he believes. The case is parallel to that sketched by our blessed Lord, which St. James may have in his mind. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy Name, and by Thy Name cast out devils, and by Thy Name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 21-23). In this case it is manifest that the profession of faith is not mere empty hypocrisy; it is not

a saying of "Lord, Lord," to one who is not believed to be the Lord. It is a faith that can remove mountains, but divorced from the love which makes it acceptable. The two, which God hath joined together, have by man's self-will been put asunder.

The relation, therefore, of the teaching of St. James to that of His Divine Brother is clear: the two are in perfect harmony. What is its relation to the teaching of St. Paul? Omitting minor differences, there are in the main three answers to this question: (1) The writer of this Epistle is deliberately contradicting and correcting the teaching of St. Paul. (2) St. James is correcting prevalent misunderstandings, or is anticipating probable misunderstandings, of the teaching of St. Paul. (3) St. James writes without reference to, and possibly without knowledge of, the precise teaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles respecting the relation between faith and works.

(1) Those who hold the first of these three views naturally maintain that the Epistle is not genuine, but the production of some one of a later age than St. James, who wished to have the great authority of his name to cover an attack upon the teaching of St. Paul. Thus F. C. Baur maintains that "the doctrine of this Epistle must be considered as intended to correct that of Paul." This, which is taken from the second edition of his work on the *Life and Work of St. Paul*, published after his death in 1860, by his pupil Zeller, may be taken as his matured opinion. In his history of the *Christian Church of the First Three Centuries*, published in 1853, he expresses himself a little less positively: "It is impossible to deny that the Epistle of James presupposes the Pauline doctrine of justification. And if this be so, its tendency is distinctly anti-Pauline,

though it may not be aimed directly against the Apostle himself. The Epistle contends against a one-sided conception of the Pauline doctrine, which was dangerous to practical Christianity." In both works alike Baur contends that the Epistle of James cannot be genuine, but is the product of some unknown writer in the second century. The opinions that our Epistle is directed against the teaching of St. Paul, and that it is not genuine, naturally go together. It is against all probability that St. James, who had supported St. Paul in the crisis at Jerusalem in A.D. 50 (Acts xv.), and who had given to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (Gal. ii. 9), should attack St. Paul's own teaching. But to deny the authenticity of the Epistle, and place it in a later age, does not really avoid the difficulty of the supposed attack on St. Paul, and it brings with it other difficulties of a no less serious character. In any case the letter is addressed to *Jewish* Christians (i. 1); and what need was there to put *them* on their guard against the teaching of a man whom they regarded with profound distrust, and whose claim to be an Apostle they denied? It would be as reasonable to warn Presbyterians against the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Pope. Besides all which, as Renan has shown, the letter sketches a state of things which would be inconceivable after the outbreak of the war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem; *i.e.* it cannot be placed later than A.D. 66.

Dr. Salmon justly observes, "To a disciple of Baur there is no more disappointing document than this Epistle of James. Here, if anywhere in the New Testament, he might expect to find evidence of anti-Pauline rancour. There is what looks like flat contradiction between this Epistle and the teaching of

St. Paul. . . . But that opposition to Paul which, on a superficial glance, we are disposed to ascribe to the Epistle of James, disappears on a closer examination. I postpone for the moment the question whether we can suppose that James intended to contradict Paul; but whether he intended it or not, he has not really done so; he has denied nothing that Paul has asserted, and asserted nothing that a disciple of Paul would care to deny. On comparing the language of James with that of Paul, all the distinctive expressions of the latter are found to be absent from the former. St. Paul's thesis is that a man is justified not by works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. James speaks only of works without any mention of the law, and of faith without any mention of Jesus Christ, the example of faith which he considers being merely the belief that there is one God. In other words, James is writing not in the interests of Judaism, but of morality. Paul taught that faith in Jesus Christ was able to justify a man uncircumcised and unobservant of the Mosaic ordinances. . . . For this Pauline teaching James not only has no word of contradiction, but he gives no sign of ever having heard of the controversy which, according to Baur, formed the most striking feature in the early history of the Church. . . . Whatever embarrassment the apparent disagreement between the Apostles has caused to orthodox theologians is as nothing in comparison with the embarrassment caused to a disciple of Baur by their fundamental agreement."[1]

We may, therefore, safely abandon a theory which involves three such difficulties. It assigns a date to

[1] *Introduction to the N. T.*, 4th ed. (Murray, 1889), pp. 504, 506, a work which may be most heartily commended to every student of the New Testament.

the Epistle utterly incompatible with its contents. It makes the writer warn Jewish Christians against teaching which they, of all Christians, were least likely to find attractive. And after all, the warning is futile; for the writer's own teaching is fundamentally the same as that which it is supposed to oppose and correct. Besides all which, we may say with Reuss that this Tübingen criticism is mere baseless ingenuity. It "overlooks the unique originality of the Epistle;" and to ascribe to the writer of it "any ulterior motives at all is simply a useless display of acuteness."[1]

(2) This last remark will not predispose us to regard with favour the second hypothesis mentioned above—that in this passage St. James is correcting prevalent misunderstandings, or is anticipating probable misunderstandings, of the teaching of St. Paul. There is no trace of any such intention, or of any anxiety on the subject. The purpose of the passage is not doctrinal at all, but, like the rest of the Epistle, eminently practical. The writer's object throughout is to inculcate the necessity of right conduct. Readiness in hearing the Word of God is all very well, and correctness of belief in God is all very well; but without readiness to do what pleases Him it is as useless as a dead vine. Whether St. James remembered the words, "We reckon that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Rom. iii. 28), must remain doubtful; for, as has been pointed out in a previous exposition (p. 57), there is some reason for believing that he had seen the Epistle to the Romans. But there is no reason for believing that he was acquainted with the parallel statement in the Epistle to

[1] *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the N. T.*, translated by E. L. Houghton (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1884), p. 143.

the Galatians, "We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believe on Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law; because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (ii. 15, 16). Of one thing, however, we may feel confident, that, had St. James been intending to give the true meaning of either or both of these statements by St. Paul, in order to correct or obviate misunderstanding, he would not have worded his exposition in such a way that it would be possible for a hasty reader to suppose that he was contradicting the Apostle of the Gentiles instead of merely explaining him. He takes no pains to show that while St. Paul speaks of works *of the law*, *i.e.* ceremonial observances, he himself is speaking of good works generally, which St. Paul no less than himself regarded as a necessary accompaniment and outcome of living faith.

Moreover, was there any likelihood that the Jewish Christians would thus misinterpret St. Paul? Among Gentile Christians there was danger of this, because they misunderstood the meaning of the Christian liberty which he so enthusiastically preached. But with Jewish converts the danger was that they would refuse to listen to St. Paul in anything, not that they would be in such a hurry to accept his teaching that they would go away with a wrong impression as to what he really meant. And precisely that doctrine of St. Paul which was so liable to be misunderstood St. James proclaims as clearly as St. Paul does in this very Epistle. He also declares, more than once, that the Gospel is the "law of *liberty*" (i. 25; ii. 12). Had

St. James been writing to Gentiles, there might have been some reason for his putting his readers on their guard against misinterpreting St. Paul's manner of preaching the Gospel: in writing "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion" there was little or no reason for so doing.

(3) We fall back, therefore, upon the far more probable view that in this passage St. James is merely following the course of his own argument, without thinking of St. Paul's teaching respecting the relation between faith and works. How much of St. Paul's teaching he knew depends upon the date assigned to this Epistle, whether before A.D. 50 or after A.D. 60. At the later date St. James must have known a good deal, both from St. Paul himself, and also from the many Jews of the Dispersion, who had heard the preaching of the Apostle in his missionary journeys, had seen some of his letters, and brought both good and evil reports of his work to the Church at Jerusalem. Each year, at the Passover and other festivals, James would receive multitudes of such visitors. But it does not follow that because he knew a good deal about St. Paul's favourite topics, and his manner of presenting the faith to his hearers, therefore he has his teaching in his mind in writing to Jewish converts. The passage before us is thoroughly intelligible, if it is treated on its own merits without any reference to Pauline doctrine; and not only so, but we may say that it becomes more intelligible when so treated.

At the opening of the Epistle St. James insists on the necessity of *faith*: "knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience" (ver. 3); and "Let him ask in faith, nothing doubting" (ver. 6). Then he passes on to insist upon the necessity of *practice:* "Be ye doers of

the Word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (ver. 22); and "Being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh" (ver. 25). At the beginning of the second chapter he does exactly the same. He first assumes that as a matter of course his hearers have *faith* (ver. 1), and then goes on to show how this must be accompanied by the *practice* of charity and mercy towards all, and especially towards the poor (vv. 2-13). The passage before us is precisely on the same lines.

It is assumed that his readers profess to have *faith* (vv. 14, 19); and St. James does not dispute the truth of this profession. But he maintains that unless this faith is productive of a corresponding *practice*, its existence is not proved, and its utility is disproved. It is as barren as a withered tree, and as lifeless as a corpse. Three times over he asserts, with simple emphasis, that faith apart from practice is dead (vv. 17, 20, 26). All which tends to show that the present paragraph comes quite naturally in the course of the exhortation, without any ulterior motive being assumed to explain it. It is in close harmony with what precedes, and thoroughly in keeping with the practical aim of the whole letter. We see how easily it might have been written by any one who was in earnest about religion and morality, without having heard a word about St. Paul's teaching respecting faith in Christ and works of the law.

It has been already pointed out that a letter addressed by a Jewish Christian to Jewish Christians would not be very likely to take account of St. Paul's doctrine, whether rightly or wrongly understood. It has also been shown that St. James, as is natural in such a letter, makes frequent appeals to the Old Testament, and also has numerous coincidences with portions of that now

much-neglected Jewish literature which forms a connecting-link between the Old and the New, especially with the Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. It was in the period in which that literature was produced that discussions as to the value of faith in God, as distinct from the fear of God, and in particular as to the faith of Abraham, the friend of God, began to be common among the Jews, especially in the Rabbinical schools. We find evidence of this in the Apocrypha itself. "Abraham was a great father of many people, . . . and when he was proved he was found faithful" (Ecclus. xliv. 19, 20). "Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness?" (1 Macc. ii. 52), where the interrogative form of sentence may have suggested the interrogation of St. James. It will be observed that in these passages we have the adjective "faithful" (πιστός); not yet the substantive "faith" (πίστις). But in the composite and later work which in our Bibles bears the name of the Second Book of Esdras we have faith frequently spoken of. "The way of truth shall be hidden, and the land shall be barren of faith" (v. 1). "As for faith, it shall flourish, corruption shall be overcome, and the truth, which hath been so long without fruit, shall be declared" (vi. 28). "Truth shall stand, and faith shall wax strong" (vii. 34). And in two remarkable passages faith is spoken of in connexion with works. "And every one that shall be saved, and shall be able to escape by his works, and by faith, whereby ye have believed, shall be preserved from the said perils, and shall see My salvation" (ix. 7, 8). "These are they that have works and faith towards the Most Mighty" (xiii. 23). With Philo faith and the faith of Abraham are common topics. He calls it "the queen

of the virtues," and the possessor of it "will bring a faultless and most fair sacrifice to God." Abraham's faith is not easy to imitate, so hard is it to trust in the unseen God rather than in the visible creation; whereas he without wavering believed that the things which were not present were already present, because of His most sure faith in Him who promised.[1]

Other instances might be quoted from Jewish literature; but these suffice to show that the nature of faith, and the special merit of Abraham's faith, were subjects often discussed among Jews, and were likely to be familiar to those whom St. James addresses. This being so, it becomes probable that what he has in his mind is not Pauline doctrine, or any perversion of it, but some Pharisaic tenet respecting these things. The view that faith is formal orthodoxy—the belief in one God—and that correctness of belief suffices for the salvation of a son of Abraham, seems to be the kind of error against which St. James is contending. About faith in Christ or in His Resurrection there is not a word. It is the cold Monotheism which the self-satisfied Pharisee has brought with him into the Christian Church, and which he supposes will render charity and good works superfluous, that St. James is condemning.[2] So far from this being a contradiction to St. Paul, it is the very doctrine which he taught, and almost in the

[1] See the passages quoted by Hatch, *Essays in Biblical Greek*, pp. 85-87 (Oxford, 1889).

[2] This kind of error is alluded to by Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho:* "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin; that is, who receives remission of his sins from God as having repented of his sins; but not as ye deceive yourselves, and some other (Jews) who resemble you in this, who say that even if they are sinners, but attain to a knowledge of God, the Lord will not impute sin to them" (cxli., p. 370, D).

same form of words. "*What doth it profit* (τί ὄφελος), my brethren," asks St. James, "if a man say he hath faith, but have not works?" "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing," says St. Paul. "And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, *it profiteth me nothing*" (οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι).

St. Paul and St. James are thus found to be agreed. It remains to be shown that in spite of his own statements to the contrary, Luther was as fully agreed with the latter as with the former. When he writes about St. James, Luther's prejudices lead him to disparage a form of teaching which he has not been at the pains to comprehend. But when he expounds St. Paul he does so in words which would serve excellently as an exposition of the teaching of St. James. In his preface to the Epistle to the Romans he writes thus: "But faith is a Divine work in us, that changes us and begets us anew of God (John i. 13); and kills the old man, makes of us quite other men in heart, courage, mind, and strength, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. Oh, it is a living, active, energetic, mighty thing, this faith, *so that it is impossible that it should not work what is good without intermission. It does not even ask whether good works are to be done, but before one asks it has done them, and is ever doing.* But he who does not do such works is a man without faith, is fumbling and looking about him for faith and good works, and knows neither the one nor the other, yet chatters and babbles many words about both.

"Faith is a living, deliberate confidence in the grace of God, so sure that it would die a thousand times for its trust. And such confidence and experience of

Divine grace make a man merry, bold, and joyful towards God and all creatures; all which the Holy Spirit does in faith. Hence the man without compulsion becomes willing and joyful to do good to every one, to serve every one, to endure everything, for the love and praise of God, who has shown him such grace. Therefore *it is impossible to sever works from faith; yea, as impossible as to sever burning and shining from fire.*"[1]

[1] *Werke*, ed. Gustav Pfizer, Frankfurt am Main, 1840, p. 1415.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FAITH OF THE DEMONS; THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM; AND THE FAITH OF RAHAB THE HARLOT.

"Thou believest that God is One; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and shudder."

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?"

"And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way?"—St. James ii. 19, 21, 25.

IN the preceding chapter several points of great interest were passed over, in order not to obscure the main issue as to the relation of this passage to the teaching of St. Paul. Some of these may now be usefully considered.

Throughout this volume, as in the companion volume on the Pastoral Epistles and other volumes for which the present writer is in no way responsible, the Revised Version has been taken as the basis of the expositions. There may be reasonable difference of opinion as to its superiority to the Authorized Version for public reading in the services of the Church, but few unprejudiced persons would deny its superiority for purposes of private study and both private and public exposition. Its superiority lies not so much in happy treatment of difficult texts, as in the correction of a

great many small errors of translation, and above all in the substitution of a great many true or probable readings for others that are false or improbable. And while there are not a few cases in which there is plenty of room for doubt whether the change, even if clearly a gain in accuracy, was worth making, there are also some in which the uninitiated student wonders why no change was made. The passage before us contains a remarkable instance. Why has the word "devils" been retained as the rendering of *δαιμόνια*, while 'demons" is relegated to the margin?

There are two Greek words, very different from one another in origin and history, which are used both in the Septuagint and in the New Testament to express the unseen and spiritual powers of evil. These are *διάβολος* and *δαιμόνιον*, or in one place *δαίμων* (Matt. xlii. 31; *not* Mark v. 12, or Luke vii. 29, or Rev. xvi. 14 and xviii. 2). The Scriptural usage of these two words is quite distinct and very marked. Excepting where it is used as an adjective (John vi. 70; 1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 3; Titus ii. 3), *διάβολος* is one of the names of Satan, the great enemy of God and of men, and the prince of the spirits of evil. It is so used in the Books of Job and of Zechariah, as well as in Wisdom ii. 24, and also throughout the New Testament, viz. in the Gospels and Acts, the Catholic and Pauline Epistles, and the Apocalypse. It is, in fact, a proper name, and is applied to one person only. It commonly, but not invariably (1 Chron. xxi. 1; Ps. cviii. [cix.] 5) has the definite article. The word *δαιμόνιον*, on the other hand, is used of those evil spirits who are the messengers and ministers of Satan. It is thus used in Isaiah, the Psalms, Tobit, Baruch, and throughout the New Testament. It is used also of the false gods of the

heathen, which were believed to be evil spirits, or at least the productions of evil spirits, who are the inspirers of idolatry; whereas Satan is never identified with any heathen divinity. Those who worship false gods are said to worship "demons," but never to worship "the devil." Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New are the two words ever interchanged. Satan is never spoken of as a *δαίμων* or *δαιμόνιον*, and his ministers are never called *διάβολοι*. Is it not a calamity that this very marked distinction should be obliterated in the English Version by translating both Greek words by the word "devil," especially when there is another word which, as the margin admits, might have been used for one of them? The Revisers have done immense service by distinguishing between *Hades*, the abode of departed spirits of men, and *Hell* or *Gehenna*, the place of punishment (iii. 6). Why did they reject a similar opportunity by refusing to distinguish *the devil* from *the demons* over whom he reigns? This is one of the suggestions of the American Committee which might have been followed with great advantage and (so far as one sees) no loss.

St. James has just been pointing out the advantage which the Christian who has works to show has over one who has only faith. The one can prove that he possesses both; the other cannot prove that he possesses either. The works of the one are evidence that the faith is there also, just as leaves and fruit are evidence that a tree is alive. But the other, who possesses only faith, cannot prove that he possesses even that. He says that he believes, and we may believe his statement; but if any one doubts or denies the truth of his profession of faith he is helpless. Just as a leafless and fruitless tree may be alive; but

who is to be sure of this? We must note, however, that in this case the statement is *not* doubted. "Thou *hast* faith, and I have works;" the possibility of possessing faith without works is not disputed. And again, "Thou *believest* that God is One;" the orthodox character of the man's creed is not called in question. This shows that there is no emphasis on "say" in the opening verse, "If a man *say* he hath faith, but have not works;" as if such a profession were incredible (see p. 137). And this remains equally true if, with some of the best editors, we turn the statement of the man's faith into a question, "Dost thou believe that God is One?" For "Thou doest well" shows that the man's orthodoxy is not questioned. The object of St. James is not to prove that the man is a hypocrite, and that his professions are false; but that, *on his own showing*, he is in a miserable condition. He may plume himself upon the correctness of his Theism; but as far as that goes, he is no better than the demons, to whom this article of faith is a source, not of joy and strength, but of horror.

It is most improbable that, if he had been alluding to the teaching of St. Paul, St. James would have selected the Unity of the Godhead as the article of faith held by the barren Christian. He would have taken faith in Christ as his example. But in writing to Jewish Christians, without any such allusion, the selection is very natural. The Monotheism of his creed, in contrast with the foolish "gods many, and lords many," of the heathen, was to the Jew a matter of religious and national pride. He gloried in his intellectual and spiritual superiority to those who could believe in a plurality of deities. And there was nothing in Christianity to make him think less highly of this

supreme article of faith. Hence, when St. James desires to give an example of the faith on which a Jewish Christian, who had sunk into a dead formalism, would be most likely to rely, he selects this article, common to both the Jewish and the Christian creed, "I believe that God is One." "Thou doest well" is the calm reply; and then follows the sarcastic addition, "The demons also believe—and shudder."

Is St. James here alluding to the belief mentioned above, that the gods of the heathen are demons? They, of all evil spirits, might be supposed to know most about the Unity of God, and to have most to fear in reference to it. "They sacrificed unto demons, which were no God," we read in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 17). And again, in the Psalms, "They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons" (cvi. 37. Comp. xcvi. 5). In these passages the Greek word *δαιμόνια* represents the Elilim or Shedim, the nonenities who were allowed to usurp the place of Jehovah.[1] And St. Paul affirms, "That the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God" (1 Cor. x. 20). It is quite possible, therefore, that St. James is thinking of demons as objects of idolatrous worship, or at any rate as seducing people into such worship, when he speaks of the demons' belief in the Unity of God.

But a suggestion which Bede makes, and which several modern commentators have followed, is well worth considering. St. James may be thinking of the demons which possessed human beings, rather than those which received or promoted idolatrous worship.

[1] Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, II., pp. 384, 386, Eng. Tr., *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, pp. 825, 827.

Bede reminds us of the many demons who went out at Christ's command, crying out that He was the Son of God, and especially of the man with the legion among the Gadarenes, who expressed not only belief, but horror: "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not." Without falling into the error of supposing that demons can mean demoniacs, we may imagine how readily one who had witnessed such scenes as those recorded in the Gospels might attribute to the demons the expressions of horror which he had heard in the words and seen on the faces of those whom demons possessed. Such expressions were the usual effect of being confronted by the Divine presence and power of Christ, and were evidence both of a belief in God and of a dread of Him. St. James, who was then living with the Mother of the Lord, and sometimes followed His Divine Brother in His wanderings, would be almost certain to have been a witness of some of these healings of demoniacs. And it is worth noting that the word which in the Authorized Version is rendered "tremble," and in the Revised "shudder" (φρίσσειν), expresses *physical* horror, especially as it affects the hair; and in itself it implies a body, and would be an inappropriate word to use of the fear felt by a purely spiritual being. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; but in the Septuagint we find it used in the Book of Job: "Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up" (iv. 15). It is a stronger word than either "fear" or "tremble," and strictly speaking can be used only of men and other animals.

This horror, then, expressed by the demons through the bodies of those whom they possess, is evidence

enough of faith. Can faith such as that save any one? Is it not obvious that a faith which produces, not works of love, but the strongest expressions of fear, is not a faith on which any one can rely for his salvation? And yet the faith of those who refuse to do good works, because they hold that their faith is sufficient to save them, is no better than the faith of the demons. Indeed, in some respects it is worse. For the sincerity of the demons' faith cannot be doubted; their terror is proof of it: whereas the formal Christian has nothing but cold professions to offer. Moreover, the demons are under no self-delusion; they know their own terrible condition. For the formalist who accepts Christian truth and neglects Christian practice there is a dreadful awakening in store. There will come a time when "believe and shudder" will be true also of him. "But, before it is too late, willest thou to get to know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?"

"Wilt thou know" does not do justice to the full meaning of the Greek (*θέλεις γνῶναι*). The meaning is not, "I would have you know," but, "Do you wish to have acquired the knowledge?" You profess to know God and to believe in Him; do you desire to know what faith in Him really means? "O vain man" is literally, "O empty man," *i.e.* empty-headed, empty-handed, and empty-hearted. Empty-headed, in being so deluded as to suppose that a dead faith can save; empty-handed, in being devoid of true spiritual riches; empty-hearted, in having no real love either for God or man. The epithet seems to be the equivalent of *Raca*, the term of contempt quoted by our Lord as the expression of that angry spirit which is akin to murder (Matt. v. 22). The use of it by St. James may be taken as an indication that the primitive Church

saw that the commands in the Sermon on the Mount are not rules to be obeyed literally, but illustrations of principles. The sin lies not so much in the precise term of reproach which is employed as in the spirit and temper which are felt and displayed in the employment of it. The change from "dead" (A.V.) to "barren" (R.V.) is not a change of translation, but of reading (*νεκρά* to *ἀργή*), the latter term meaning "*workless*, idle, unproductive" (Matt. xx. 3, 6; 1 Tim. v. 13; Titus i. 12; 2 Peter i. 8). Aristotle (*Nic. Eth.*, I. vii. 11) asks whether it is likely that every member of a man's body should have a function or work (*ἔργον*) to perform, and that man as a whole should be functionless (*ἀργός*). Would nature have produced such a vain contradiction? We should reproduce the spirit of St. James's pointed interrogation if we rendered "that faith without fruits is fruitless."

In contrast with this barren faith, which makes a man's spiritual condition no better than that of the demons, St. James places two conspicuous instances of living and fruitful faith—Abraham and Rahab. The case of "Abraham our father" would be the first that would occur to every Jew. As the passages in the Apocrypha (Wisdom x. 5; Ecclus. xliv. 20; 1 Macc. ii. 52) prove, Abraham's faith was a subject of frequent discussion among the Jews, and this fact is quite enough to account for its mention by St. James, St. Paul (Rom. iv. 3; Gal. iii. 6), and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 17), without supposing that any one of them had seen the writings of the others. Certainly there is no proof that the writer of this Epistle is the borrower, if there is borrowing on either side. It is urged that between the authors of this Epistle and that to the Hebrews there must be

dependence on one side or the other, because each selects not only Abraham, but Rahab, as an example of faith; and Rahab is so strange an example that it is unlikely that two writers would have selected it independently. There is force in the argument, but less than at first sight appears. The presence of Rahab's name in the genealogy of the Christ (Matt. i. 5), in which so few women are mentioned, must have given thoughtful persons food for reflexion. Why was such a woman singled out for such distinction? The answer to this question cannot be given with certainty. But whatever caused her to be mentioned in the genealogy may also have caused her to be mentioned by St. James and the writer of Hebrews; or the fact of her being in the genealogy may have suggested her to the authors of these two Epistles. This latter alternative does not necessarily imply that these two writers were acquainted with the written Gospel of St. Matthew, which was perhaps not in existence when they wrote. The genealogy, at any rate, was in existence, for St. Matthew no doubt copied it from official or family registers. Assuming, however, that it is not a mere coincidence that both writers use Abraham and Rahab as examples of fruitful faith, it is altogether arbitrary to decide that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews wrote first. The probabilities are the other way. Had St. James known that Epistle, he would have made more use of it.

The two examples are in many respects very different. Their resemblance consists in this, that in both cases faith found expression in action, and this action was the source of the believer's deliverance. The case of Abraham, which St. Paul uses to prove the worthlessness of "works of the law" in comparison

with a living faith, is used by St. James to prove the worthlessness of a dead faith in comparison with works of love which are evidence that there is a living faith behind them. But it should be noticed that a different episode in Abraham's life is taken in each Epistle, and this is a further reason for believing that neither writer refers to the other. St. Paul appeals to Abraham's faith in believing that he should have a son when he was a hundred, and Sarah ninety years of age (Rom. iv. 19). St. James appeals to Abraham's faith in offering up Isaac, when there seemed to be no possibility of the Divine promise being fulfilled if Isaac was slain. The latter required more faith than the former, and was much more distinctly an *act* of faith; a work, or series of works, that would never have been accomplished if there had not been a very vigorous faith to inspire and support the doer. The *result* (ἐξ ἔργων) was that Abraham was "justified," *i.e.* he was accounted righteous, and the reward of his faith was with still greater solemnity and fulness than on the first occasion (Gen. xv. 4-6) promised to him: "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, *because thou hast done this thing*, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; *because thou hast obeyed My voice*" (Gen. xxii. 16-18).

With the expression "was justified *as a result of* works" (ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη), which is used both of Abraham and of Rahab, should be compared our Lord's saying, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. xii. 37),

which are of exactly the same form; literally, "*As a result of* thy words thou shalt be accounted righteous, and *as a result of* thy words thou shalt be condemned" (*ἐκ τῶν λόγων σου δικαιωθήσῃ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν λόγων σου καταδικασθήσῃ*); that is, it is from the consideration of the words in the one case, and of the works in the other, that the sentence of approval proceeds; they are the *source* of the justification. Of course from the point of view taken by St. James words are "works;" good words spoken for the love of God are quite as much fruits of faith and evidence of faith as good deeds. It is not impossible that his phrase is an echo of expressions which he had heard used by Christ.

That the words rendered "offered up Isaac his son upon the altar" really mean this, and not merely "brought Isaac his son as a victim up to the altar," is clear from other passages where the same phrase (*ἀναφέρειν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον*) occurs. Noah "offering burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen. viii. 20) and Christ "offering our sins on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24) might be interpreted either way, although the *bringing up* to the altar and to the tree does not seem so natural as the *offering on them.* But a passage in Leviticus about the offerings of the leper is quite decisive: "Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering: and the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meal offering upon the altar" (xiv. 19, 20). It would be very unnatural to speak of bringing the victim up to the altar after it had been slain. (Comp. Baruch i. 10; 1 Macc. iv. 53.) The Vulgate, Luther, Beza, and all English versions agreed in this translation; and it is not a matter of small importance, not a mere nicety of rendering. In all completeness, both of will and deed, Abraham had actually surrendered and offered up to God his

only son, when he laid him bound upon the altar, and took the knife to slay him—to slay that son of whom God had promised, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Then "was the Scripture fulfilled;" *i.e.* what had been spoken and partly fulfilled before (Gen. xv. 6) received a more complete and a higher fulfilment. Greater faith hath no man than this, that a man gives back His own promises unto God. The real but incomplete faith of believing that aged parents could become the progenitors of countless thousands had been accepted and rewarded. Much more, therefore, was the perfect faith of offering to God the one hope of posterity accepted and rewarded. This last was a *work* in which his faith co-operated, and which proved the complete development of his faith; by it "was faith made perfect."

"He was called the Friend of God." Abraham was so called in Jewish tradition; and to this day this is his name among his descendants the Arabs, who much more commonly speak of him as "the Friend" (*El Khalil*), or "the Friend of God" (*El Khalil Allah*), than by the name Abraham. Nowhere in the Old Testament does he receive this name, although our Versions, both Authorized and Revised, would lead us to suppose that he is so called. The word is found neither in the Hebrew nor in existing copies of the Septuagint. In 2 Chron. xx. 7, "Abraham Thy friend" should be "Abraham Thy beloved;" and in Isaiah xli. 8, "Abraham My friend" should be "Abraham whom I loved." In both passages, however, the Vulgate has the rendering *amicus*, and some copies of the Septuagint had the reading "friend" in 2 Chron. xx. 7, while Symmachus had it in Isa. xli. 8 (See Field's *Hexapla*, I., p. 744; II., p. 513). Clement of Rome (x., xvii.) probably derived this name for Abraham

from St. James. But even if Abraham is nowhere styled "the Friend of God," he is abundantly described as being such. God talks with him as a man talks with his friend, and asks, "Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?" (Gen. xviii. 17); which is the very token of friendship pointed out by Christ. "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you" (John xv. 15). It is worthy of note that St. James seems to intimate that the word is not in the sacred writings. The words, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness," are introduced with the formula, "The Scripture was fulfilled which saith." Of the title "Friend of God" it is simply said "he was called," without stating by whom.[1]

"*In like manner* was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works?" It is because of the similarity of her

[1] The following story is given by Mahometan commentators on the passage, "God took Abraham for His friend," which occurs in the fourth chapter of the Koran, entitled *Nessa*, or "Women:" Abraham was the father of the poor, and in a famine he emptied his granaries to feed them. Then he sent to one of his friends, who was a great lord in Egypt, for corn. But the friend said, "We also are in danger of famine. The corn is not wanted for Abraham, but for his poor. I must keep it for our own poor." And the messengers returned with empty sacks. As they neared home they feared being mocked for their failure; so they filled their sacks with sand, and came in well laden. In private they told Abraham of his friend's refusal, and Abraham at once retired to pray. Meanwhile Sarah opened one of the sacks, and found excellent flour in it, and with this began to bake bread for the poor. When Abraham returned from prayer he asked Sarah whence she obtained the flour. "From that which your friend in Egypt has sent," she replied. "Say rather from that which the true Friend has sent, that is God; for it is He who never fails us in our need." At the moment when Abraham called God his

case to Abraham's, both of them being a contrast to the formal Christian and the demons, that Rahab is introduced. In her case also faith led to action, and the action had its result in the salvation of the agent. If there had been faith without action, if she had merely believed the spies without doing anything in consequence of her belief, she would have perished. She was glorified in Jewish tradition, perhaps as being a typical forerunner of proselytes from the Gentile world; and it may be that this accounts for her being mentioned in the genealogy of the Messiah, and consequently by St. James and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Talmud mentions a quite untrustworthy tradition that she married Joshua, and became the ancestress of eight persons who were both priests and prophets, and also of Huldah the prophetess. St. Matthew gives Salmon the son of Naasson as her husband; he may have been one of the spies.

But the contrast between Abraham and Rahab is almost as marked as the similarity. He is the friend of God, and she is of a vile heathen nation and a harlot. His great act of faith is manifested towards God, hers towards men. His is the crowning act of his spiritual development; hers is the first sign of a faith just beginning to exist. He is the aged saint, while she is barely a catechumen. But according to her light,

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Friend God took Abraham also to be His friend. (See the notes in Sale's *Koran;* D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*, Maestricht, 1776, p. 13; Bishop Thirlwall's *Letters to a Friend*, Bentley, 1882, pp. 63, 64).

Eusebius (*Præp. Evan.* IX. xix., p. 420) quotes Alexander Polyhistor (*c.* B.C. 80) as stating that Molon (Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, II. xiv.) interpreted the name Abraham as meaning the "Father's Friend" (πατρὸς φίλος), probably through a misspelling of the name. (See Lightfoot's note on Clem. Rom. x.)

which was that of a very faulty moral standard, "she did what she could," and it was accepted.

These contrasts have their place in the argument, as well as the similarities. The readers of the Epistle might think, "Heroic acts are all very suitable for Abraham; but we are not Abrahams, and must be content with sharing his faith in the true God; we cannot and need not imitate his acts." "But," St. James replies (and he writes ὁμοίως δέ, not καὶ ὁμοίως), "there is Rahab, Rahab the heathen, Rahab the harlot; at least you can imitate her." And for the Jewish Christians of that day her example was very much in point. She welcomed and believed the messengers, whom her countrymen persecuted, and would have slain. She separated herself from her unbelieving and hostile people, and went over to an unpopular and despised cause. She saved the preachers of an unwelcome message for the fulfilment of the Divine mission with which they had been entrusted. Substitute the Apostles for the spies, and all this is true of the believing Jews of that age. And as if to suggest this lesson, St. James speaks not of "young men," as Joshua vi. 23, nor of "spies," as Hebrews xi. 31, but of "messengers," a term which is as applicable to those who were sent by Jesus Christ as to those who were sent by Joshua.

Plutarch, who was a young man at the time when this Epistle was written, has the following story of Alexander the Great, in his "Apothegms of Kings and Generals": The young Alexander was not at all pleased with the successes of his father, Philip of Macedon. "My father will leave me nothing," he said. The young nobles who were brought up with him replied, "He is gaining all this for you." Almost in the words of St. James, though with a very different meaning, he

answered, "*What does it profit* (τί ὄφελος;), if I possess much and *do* nothing?" The future conqueror scorned to have everything done for him. In quite another spirit the Christian must remember that if he is to conquer he must not suppose that his heavenly Father, who has done so much for him, has left him nothing to do. There is the fate of the barren fig-tree as a perpetual warning to those who are royal in their professions of faith, and paupers in good works.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS. THE POWERS AND PROPENSITIES OF THE TONGUE. THE SELF-DEFILEMENT OF THE RECKLESS TALKER.

"Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment. For in many things we all stumble. If any stumble not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths, that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also. Behold, the ships also, though they are so great, and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth. So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison."—St. James iii. 1-8.

FROM the "idle faith" (*πίστις ἀργή*) St. James goes on to speak of the "idle word" (*ῥῆμα ἀργόν*). The change from the subject of faith and works to that of the temptations and sins of speech is not so abrupt and arbitrary as at first sight appears. The need of warning his readers against sins of the tongue has been in his mind from the first. Twice in the first chapter it comes to the surface. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"

(ver. 19), as if being slow to hear and swift to speak were much the same as being swift to wrath. And again, "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain" (ver. 25). And now the subject of barren faith causes him to return to the warning once more. For it is precisely those who neglect good works that are given to talk much about the excellence of their faith, and are always ready to instruct and lecture others. That *controversies* about faith and works suggested to him this section about offences of the tongue, is a gratuitous hypothesis. St. James shows no knowledge of any such controversies. As already pointed out, the purpose of the preceding section (ii. 14-26) is not controversial or doctrinal, but purely practical, like the rest of the Epistle. The paragraph before us is of the same character; it is against those who substitute words for works.

St. James is entirely of Carlyle's opinion that in the majority of cases, if "speech is silvern, silence is golden;" but he does not write twenty volumes to prove the truth of this doctrine. "In noble uprightness, he values only the strict practice of concrete duties, and hates talk" (Reuss); and while quite admitting that teachers are necessary, and that some are called to undertake this office, he tells all those who desire to undertake it that what they have to bear in mind is its perils and responsibilities. And it is obvious that true teachers must always be a minority. There is something seriously wrong when the majority in the community, or even a large number, are pressing forward to teach the rest.

"Be not many teachers, my brethren;" or, if we are to do full justice to the compact fulness of the

original, "Do not many of you become teachers." St. James is not protesting against a usurpation of the ministerial office; to suppose this is to give far too specific a meaning to his simple language. The context points to no such sin as that of Korah and his company, but simply to the folly of incurring needless danger and temptation. In the Jewish synagogues any one who was disposed to do so might come forward to teach, and St. James writes at a time when the same freedom prevailed in the Christian congregations. "Each had a psalm, had a teaching, had a revelation, had a tongue, had an interpretation. . . . All could prophesy one by one, that all might learn and all be comforted" (1 Cor. xiv. 26, 31). But in both cases the freedom led to serious disorders. The desire to be called of men "Rabbi, Rabbi," told among Jews and Christians alike, and many were eager to expound who had still the very elements of true religion to learn. It is against this general desire to be prominent as instructors both in private and in public that St. James is here warning his readers. The Christian Church already has its ministers distinct from the laity, to whom the laity are to apply for spiritual help (v. 14); but it is not an invasion of their office by the laity to which St. James refers, when he says, "Do not many of you become teachers." These Jewish Christians of the Dispersion were like those at Rome to whom St. Paul writes; each of them was confident that his knowledge of God and the Law made him competent to become "a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the Law the form of knowledge and of the truth" (Rom. ii. 17 *ff.*). But in teaching others they forgot to teach themselves; they

failed to see that to preach the law without being a doer of the law was to cause God's name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles; and that to possess faith and do nothing but talk was but to increase their own condemnation; for it was to place themselves among those who are condemned by Christ because "they say and do not" (Matt. xxiii. 3). The phrase "to receive judgment" (*κρῖμα λαμβάνειν*) is in *form* a neutral one: the judgment may conceivably be a favourable one, but in *usage* it implies that the judgment is adverse (Mark xii. 40; Luke xx. 47; Rom. xiii. 2). Even without the verb "receive" this word "judgment" in the New Testament generally has the meaning of a *condemnatory* sentence (Rom. ii. 2, 3; iii. 8; v. 16; 1 Cor. xi. 29; Gal. v. 10; 1 Tim. iii. 6; v. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 17; 2 Pet. ii. 3; Jude 4; Rev. xvii. 1; xviii. 20). And there is no reason to doubt that such is the meaning here; the context requires it. The fact that St. James with affectionate humility and persuasiveness includes himself in the judgment—"*we* shall receive"—by no means proves that the word is here used in a neutral sense. In this he is like St. John, who breaks the logical flow of a sentence in a similar manner, rather than seem not to include himself: "If any man sin, *we* have an Advocate" (1 John ii. 1); *he* is as much in need of the Advocate as others. So also here, St. James, as being a teacher, shares in the heavier condemnation of teachers. It was the conviction that the word is not neutral, but condemnatory, which produced the rendering in the Vulgate, "knowing that *ye* receive greater condemnation" (*scientes quoniam majus judicium sumitis*), it being thought that St. James ought not to be included in such a judgment.

But this is to miss the point of the passage. St. James says that "in many things we stumble—*every one of us*." He uses the strong form of the adjective (ἅπαντες for πάντες), and places it last with great emphasis. Every one of us sins, and therefore there is condemnation in store for every one of us. But those of us who are teachers will receive a heavier sentence than those of us who are not such; for our obligations to live up to the law which we know, and profess, and urge upon others, are far greater. Heaviest of all will be the condemnation of those who, without being called or qualified, through fanaticism, or an itch for notoriety, or a craze for controversy, or a love of fault-finding, push themselves forward to dispense instruction and censure. They are among the fools who "rush in where angels fear to tread," and thereby incur responsibilities which they need not, and ought not, to have incurred, because they do not possess the qualifications for meeting them and discharging them. The argument is simple and plain: "Some of us must teach. All of us frequently fall. Teachers who fall are more severely judged than others. Therefore do not many of you become teachers."

In what sphere is it that we most frequently fall? Precisely in that sphere in which the activity of teachers specially lies—in speech. "If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man." St. James is not thinking merely of the teacher who never makes a mistake, but of the man who never sins with the tongue. There is an obvious, but by no means exclusive, reference to teachers, and that is all. To every one of us, whatever our sphere in life, the saying comes home that one who offends not in word is indeed a *perfect* man. By "perfect" (τέλειος) he means

one who has attained full spiritual and moral development, who is "perfect and entire, lacking in nothing" (i. 4). He is no longer a babe, but an adult; no longer a learner, but an adept. He is a full and complete man, with perfect command of all the faculties of soul and body. He has the full use of them, and complete control over them. The man who can bridle the most rebellious part of his nature, and keep it in faultless subjection, can bridle also the whole. This use of "perfect," as opposed to what is immature and incomplete, is the commonest use of the word in the New Testament. But sometimes it is a religious or philosophical term, borrowed from heathen mysteries or heathen philosophy. In such cases it signifies the *initiated*, as distinct from novices. Such a metaphor was very applicable to the Gospel, and St. Paul sometimes employs it (1 Cor. ii. 6; Col. i. 28); but it may be doubted whether any such thought is in St. James's mind here, although such a metaphor would have suited the subject. He who never stumbles in word can be no novice, but must be fully initiated in Christian discipline. But the simpler interpretation is better. He who can school the tongue can school the hands and the feet, the heart and the brain, in fact "the whole body," the whole of his nature, and is therefore a perfect man.

In his characteristic manner, St. James turns to natural objects for illustrations to enforce his point. "Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths, that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body." The changes made here by the Revisers are changes caused by a very necessary correction of the Greek text (εἰ δέ instead of ἴδε, which St. James nowhere else uses, or ἰδού, which here has very little evidence in its favour); for the text has been corrupted

in order to simplify a rather difficult and doubtful construction. The uncorrupted text may be taken in two ways. *Either*, "But if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths, that they may obey us, and so turn about their whole body"—(much more ought we to do so to ourselves); this obvious conclusion being not stated, but left for us to supply at the end of an unfinished sentence. *Or*, as the Revisers take it, which is simpler, and leaves nothing to be understood. A man who can govern his tongue can govern his whole nature, just as a bridle controls, not merely the horse's mouth, but the whole animal. This first metaphor is suggested by the writer's own language. He has just spoken of the perfect man *bridling* his whole body, as before he spoke of the impossibility of true religion in one who does not *bridle* his tongue (i. 26); and this naturally suggests the illustration of the horses.

The argument is *à fortiori* from the horse to the man, and still more from the ship to the man, so that the whole forms a climax, the point throughout being the same, viz. the smallness of the part to be controlled in order to have control over the whole. And in order to bring out the fact that the ships are a stronger illustration than the horses, we should translate, "Behold, *even* the ships, though they are so great," etc., rather than "Behold, the ships *also*, though they are so great." First the statement of the case (ver. 2), then the illustration from the horses (ver. 3), then "*even* the ships" (ver. 4), and finally the application, "so the tongue *also*" (ver. 5). Thus all runs smoothly. If, as is certainly the case, we are able to govern irrational creatures with a small bit, how much more ourselves through the tongue; for just as he who has

lost his hold of the reins has lost control over the horse, so he who has lost his hold on his tongue has lost control over himself. The case of the ship is still stronger. It is not only devoid of reason, but devoid of life. It cannot be taught obedience. It offers a dead resistance, which is all the greater because of its much greater size, and because it is driven by rough winds; yet its whole mass can be turned about by whoever has control of the little rudder, to lose command of which is to lose command of all. How much more, therefore, may we keep command over ourselves by having command over our tongues! There is nothing more in the metaphor than this. We may, if we please, go on with Bede, and turn the whole into a parable, and make the sea mean human life, and the winds mean temptations, and so on; but we must beware of supposing that anything of that kind was in the mind of St. James, or belongs to the explanation of the passage. Such symbolism is read into the text, not extracted from it. It is legitimate as a means of edifying, but it is not interpretation.

The expression "rough winds" (*σκληρῶν ἀνέμων*) is peculiar, "rough" meaning hard or harsh, especially to the touch, and hence of what is intractable or disagreeable in other ways (1 Sam. xxv. 3; Matt. xxv. 24; John vi. 60; Acts xxvi. 14; Jude 15). Perhaps in only one other passage in Greek literature, previous to this Epistle, is it used as an epithet of wind, viz. in Prov. xxvii. 16, a passage in which the Septuagint differs widely from the Hebrew and from our versions. St. James, who seems to have been specially fond of the sapiential books of Scripture, may have derived this expression from the Proverbs.

"So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth

great things." The tongue, like the bit and the rudder, is only a very small part of the whole, and yet, like them, it can do great things. St. James says, "boasteth great things," rather than "doeth great things," not in order to insinuate that the tongue boasts of what it cannot or does not do, which would spoil the argument, but in order to prepare the way for the change in the point of the argument. Hitherto the point has been *the immense influence which the small organ of speech has over our whole being*, and the consequent need of controlling it when we want to control ourselves. We must take care to begin the control in the right place. This point being established, the argument takes a somewhat different turn, and the necessity of curbing the tongue is shown, not from its great power, but from its *inherent malignity*. It can be made to discharge good offices, but its natural bent is towards evil. If left unchecked, it is certain to do incalculable mischief. The expression "boasteth great things" marks the transition from the one point to the other, and in a measure combines them both. There are great things done; that shows the tongue's power. And it boasts about them; that shows its bad character.[1]

This second point, like the first, is enforced by two illustrations taken from the world of nature. The first was illustrated by the power of bits and rudders; the second is illustrated by the capacity for mischief in fire and in venomous beasts. "Behold, what a fire kindles what a wood!" is the literal rendering of the Greek, where "what a fire" evidently means "how small a

[1] There is a story that Amasis, King of Egypt, sent a sacrifice to Bias the sage, asking him to send back the best part and the worst; and Bias sent back the tongue.

fire," while "what a wood" means "how large a wood." The traveller's camp-fire is enough to set a whole forest in flames, and the camp-fire was kindled by a few sparks. "Fire," it is sometimes truly said, "is a good servant, but a bad master," and precisely the same may with equal truth be said of the tongue. So long as it is kept under control it does excellent service; but directly it can run on unchecked, and lead instead of obeying, it begins to do untold mischief. We sometimes speak of men whose "*pens* run away with them;" but a far commoner case is that of persons whose *tongues* run away with them, whose untamed and unbridled tongues say things which are neither seriously thought nor (even at the moment) seriously meant. The habit of saying "great things" and using strong language is a condition of constant peril, which will inevitably lead the speaker into evil. It is a reckless handling of highly dangerous material. It is playing with fire.

Yes, "the tongue is a fire. The world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body." The right punctuation of this sentence cannot be determined with certainty, and other possible arrangements will be found in the margin of the Revised Version; but on the whole this seems to be the best. The one thing that is certain is that the "so" of the Authorized Version—"*so* is the tongue among our members"—is not genuine; if it were, it would settle the construction and the punctuation in favour of what is at least the second best arrangement: "The tongue is a fire, that world of iniquity: the tongue is among our members that which defileth the whole body." The meaning of "the world of iniquity" has been a good deal discussed, but is not really doubtful.

The ordinary colloquial signification is the right one. The tongue is a boundless store of mischief, an inexhaustible source of evil, a universe of iniquity; *universitas iniquitatis*, as the Vulgate renders it. It contains within itself the elements of all unrighteousness; it is charged with endless possibilities of sin. This use of "world" (κόσμος) seems not to occur in classical Greek; but it is found in the Septuagint of the Proverbs, and again in a passage where the Greek differs widely from the Hebrew (see above, p. 172). What is still more remarkable, it occurs immediately after the mention of sins of speech: "An evil man listeneth to the tongue of the wicked; but a righteous man giveth no heed to false lips. The faithful man has the whole *world* of wealth; but the faithless not even a penny" (xvii. 4).

"*Is* the tongue." The word for "is" must be observed (not ἐστι, nor ὑπάρχει, but καθίσταται). Its literal meaning is "constitutes itself," and it occurs again in iv. 4, where the Revisers rightly translate it "maketh himself:" "Whosoever would be a friend of the world *maketh himself* an enemy of God." The tongue was not created by God to be a permanent source of all kinds of evil; like the rest of creation, it was made "very good," "the best member that we have." It is by its own undisciplined and lawless career that it *makes itself* "the world of iniquity," that it *constitutes itself* among our members as "that which defileth our whole body." This helps to explain what St. James means by "*unspotted*" (ἄσπιλον) or "undefiled" (i. 27). He who does not bridle his tongue is not really religious. Pure religion consists in keeping in check that "which *defileth* (ἡ σπιλοῦσα) our whole body." And the tongue defiles us in three ways;—by suggesting sin to ourselves and others; by committing

sin, as in all cases of lying and blasphemy; and by excusing or defending sin. It is a palmary instance of the principle that the best when perverted becomes the worst—*corruptio optimi fit pessima.*

It "setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell." We must be content to leave the precise meaning of the words rendered "the wheel of nature" (τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως) undetermined. The general meaning is evident enough, but we cannot be sure what image St. James had in his mind when he wrote the words. The one substantive is obviously a metaphor, and the other is vague in meaning (as the latter occurs i. 23, the two passages should be compared in expounding); but what the exact idea to be conveyed by the combination is, remains a matter for conjecture. And the conjectures are numerous, of which one must suffice. The tongue is a centre from which mischief radiates; that is the main thought. A wheel that has caught fire at the axle is at last wholly consumed, as the fire spreads through the spokes to the circumference. So also in society. Passions kindled by unscrupulous language spread through various channels and classes, till the whole cycle of human life is in flames. Reckless language first of all "defiles the whole" nature of the man who employs it, and then works destruction far and wide through the vast machinery of society. And to this there are no limits; so long as there is material, the fire will continue to burn.

How did the fire begin? How does the tongue, which was created for far other purposes, acquire this deadly propensity? St. James leaves us in no doubt upon that point. It is an inspiration of the evil one. The enemy, who steals away the good seed, and sows weeds among the wheat, turns the immense powers of

the tongue to destruction. The old serpent imbues it with his own poison. He imparts to it his own diabolical agency. He is perpetually setting it on fire (present participle) from hell.

The second metaphor by which the malignant propensity of the tongue is illustrated is plain enough. It is an untamable, venomous beast. It combines the ferocity of the tiger and the mockery of the ape with the subtlety and venom of the serpent. It can be checked, can be disciplined, can be taught to do good and useful things; but it can never be tamed, and must never be trusted. If care and watchfulness are laid aside, its evil nature will burst out again, and the results will be calamitous.

There are many other passages in Scripture which contain warnings about sins of the tongue: see especially Proverbs xvi. 27, 28; Ecclus. v. 13, 14, and xxviii. 9-23, from which St. James may have drawn some of his thoughts. But what is peculiar to his statement of the matter is *this*, that *the reckless tongue defiles the whole nature of the man who owns it.* Other writers tell us of the mischief which the foul-mouthed man does to others, and of the punishment which will one day fall upon himself. St. James does not lose sight of that side of the matter, but the special point of his stern warning is the insisting upon the fact that unbridled speech is a *pollution* to the man that employs it. Every faculty of mind or body with which he has been endowed is contaminated by the subtle poison which is allowed to proceed from his lips. It is a special application of the principle laid down by Christ, which was at first a perplexity even to the Twelve, "The things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man" (Mark vii. 15, 20, 23). The

emphasis with which Christ taught this ought to be noticed. On purpose to insist upon it, "He called to Him the multitude *again*, and said unto them, Hear ye *all* of you, and *understand:* there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man." And He repeats this principle a second and a third time to His disciples privately. "Are ye so without understanding also? . . . That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. . . . All these things proceed from within, and defile the man." If even an unspoken thought can defile, when it has not yet proceeded farther than the heart, much greater will be the pollution if the evil thing is allowed to come to the birth by passing the barrier of the lips. This flow of evil from us means nothing less than this, that we have made ourselves a channel through which infernal agencies pass into the world. Is it possible for such a channel to escape defilement?

CHAPTER XV.

THE MORAL CONTRADICTIONS IN THE RECKLESS TALKER.

"Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the likeness of God: out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? Can a fig-tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither can salt water yield sweet."—St. James iii. 9-12.

IN these concluding sentences of the paragraph respecting sins of the tongue St. James does two things—he shows the moral chaos to which the Christian who fails to control his tongue is reduced, and he thereby shows such a man how vain it is for him to hope that the worship which he offers to Almighty God can be pure and acceptable. He has made himself the channel of hellish influences. He cannot at pleasure make himself the channel of heavenly influences, or become the offerer of holy sacrifices. The fires of Pentecost will not rest where the fires of Gehenna are working, nor can one who has become the minister of Satan at the same time be a minister to offer praise to God.

When those who would have excused themselves for their lack of good works pleaded the correctness of their faith, St. James told them that such faith was

barren and dead, and incapable of saving them from condemnation. Similarly, the man who thinks himself to be religious, and does not bridle his tongue, was told that his religion is vain (i. 26). And in the passage before us St. James explains how that is. His religion or religious worship (*θρησκεία*) is a mockery and a contradiction. The offering is tainted; it comes from a polluted altar and a polluted priest. A man who curses his fellow men, and then blesses God, is like one who professes the profoundest respect for his sovereign, while he insults the royal family, throws mud at the royal portraits, and ostentatiously disregards the royal wishes. It is further proof of the evil character of the tongue that it is capable of lending itself to such chaotic activity. "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father," *i.e.* God in His might and in His love; "and therewith curse we men, which are made after the likeness of God." The heathen fable tells us the apparent contradiction of being able to blow both hot and cold with the same breath; and the son of Sirach points out that "if thou blow the spark, it shall burn; if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched; and both these come out of thy mouth" (Ecclus. xxviii. 12). St. James, who may have had this passage in his mind, shows us that there is a real and a moral contradiction which goes far beyond either of these: "Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing." Well may he add, with affectionate earnestness, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

Assuredly they ought not; and yet how common the contradiction has been, and still is, among those who seem to be, and who think themselves to be, religious people! There is perhaps no particular in which persons professing to have a desire to serve God are

more ready to invade His prerogatives than in venturing to denounce those who differ from themselves, and are supposed to be therefore under the ban of Heaven. "They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they do not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. x. 2, 3). Hence they rashly and intemperately "curse whom the Lord hath not cursed, and defy whom the Lord hath not defied" (Num. xxiii. 8). There are still many who believe that not only in the psalms and hymns in which they bless the Lord, but also in the sermons and pamphlets in which they fulminate against their fellow-Christians, they are "offering service to God" (John xvi. 2). There are many questions which have to be carefully considered and answered before a Christian mouth, which has been consecrated to the praise of our Lord and Father, ought to venture to utter denunciations against others who worship the same God and are also His offspring and His image. Is it quite certain that the supposed evil is something which God abhors; that those whom we would denounce are responsible for it; that denunciation of *them* will do any good; that this is the proper time for such denunciation; that *we* are the proper persons to utter it? About every one of these questions the most fatal mistakes are constantly being made. The singing of *Te Deums* after massacres and *dragonnades* is perhaps no longer possible; but alternations between religious services and religious prosecutions, between writing pious books and publishing exasperating articles, are by no means extinct. For one case in which harm has been done because no one has come forward to denounce a wrong-doer, there are ten cases in which harm has been done

because some one has been indiscreetly, or inopportunely, or uncharitably, or unjustly denounced. "Praise is not seasonable (ὡραῖος) in the mouth of a sinner" (Ecclus. xv. 9); and whatever may have been the writer's meaning in the difficult passage in which it occurs, we may give it a meaning that will bring it into harmony with what St. James says here. The praise of God is not seasonable in the mouth of one who is ever sinning in reviling God's children.

The illustrations of the fountain and the fig-tree are among the touches which, if they do not indicate one who is familiar with Palestine, at any rate agree well with the fact that the writer of this Epistle was such. Springs tainted with salt or with sulphur are not rare, and it is stated that most of those on the eastern slope of the hill-country of Judæa are brackish. The fig-tree, the vine, and the olive were abundant throughout the whole country; and St. James, if he looked out of window as he was writing, would be likely enough to see all three. It is not improbable that in one or more of the illustrations he is following some ancient saying or proverb. Thus, Arrian, the pupil of Epictetus, writing less than a century later, asks, "How can a vine grow, not vinewise, but olivewise, or an olive, on the other hand, not olivewise, but vinewise? It is impossible, inconceivable." It is possible that our Lord Himself, when He used a similar illustration in connexion with the worst of all sins of the tongue, was adapting a proverb already in use. In speaking of "the blasphemy against the Spirit" He says, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of

the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. xii. 33-36). And previously, in the Sermon on the Mount, where He is speaking of deeds rather than of words, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. vii. 16-18).

Can it be the case that while physical contradictions are not permitted in the lower classes of unconscious objects, moral contradictions of a very monstrous kind are allowed in the highest of all earthly creatures? The "double-minded man," who prays and doubts, receives nothing from the Lord, because his petition is only in form a prayer; it lacks the essential characteristic of prayer, which is faith. But the double-tongued man, who blesses God and curses men, what does he receive? Just as the double-minded man is judged by his doubts, and not by his forms of prayer, so the double-tongued man is judged by his curses, and not by his forms of praise. In each case one or the other of the two contradictories is not real. If there is prayer, there are no doubts; and if there are doubts, there is no prayer—no prayer that will avail with God. So also in the other case: if God is sincerely and heartily blessed, there will be no cursing of His children; and if there is such cursing, God cannot acceptably be blessed; the very words

of praise, coming from such lips, will be an offence to Him.

But it may be urged, our Lord Himself has set us an example of strong denunciation in the woes which He pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees; and again, St. Paul cursed Hymenæus and Alexander (1 Tim. i. 20), the incestuous person at Corinth (1 Cor. v. 5), and Elymas the sorcerer (Acts xiii. 10). Most true. But firstly, these curses were uttered by those who could not err in such things. Christ "knew what was in man," and could read the hearts of all; and the fact that St. Paul's curses were supernaturally fulfilled proves that he was acting under Divine guidance in what he said. And secondly, these stern utterances had their source in love; not, as human curses commonly have, in hate. It was in order that those on whom they were pronounced might be warned, and schooled to better things, that they were uttered; and we know that in the case of the sinner at Corinth the severe remedy had this effect; the curse was really a blessing. When *we* have infallible guidance, and when *we* are able by supernatural results to prove that we possess it, it will be time enough to begin to deal in curses. And let us remember *the proportion* which such things bear to the rest of Christ's words and of St. Paul's words, so far as they have been preserved for us. Christ wrought numberless miracles of mercy: besides those which are recorded in detail, we are frequently told that "He healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many devils" (Mark i. 34); that "He had healed many" (iii. 10); that "wheresoever He entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the market-places, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but

the border of His garment; and as many as touched Him were made whole" (vi. 56); and so forth (John xxi. 25). But He wrought only one miracle of judgment, and that was upon a tree, which could teach the necessary lesson without feeling the punishment (Mark xi. 12-23). All this applies with much force to those who believe themselves to be called upon to denounce and curse all such as seem to them to be enemies of God and His truth: but with how much more force to those who in moments of anger and irritation deal in execrations on their own account, and curse a fellow-Christian, not because he seems to them to have offended God, but because he has offended themselves! That such persons should suppose that their polluted mouths can offer acceptable praises to the Lord and Father, is indeed a moral contradiction of the most startling kind. And are such cases rare? Is it so uncommon a thing for a man to attend church regularly, and join with apparent devotion in the services, and yet think little of the grievous words which he allows himself to utter when his temper is severely tried? How amazed and offended he would be if he were invited to eat at a table which had been used for some disgusting purpose, and had never since been cleansed! And yet he does not hesitate to "defile his whole body" with his unbridled tongue, and then offer praise to God from this polluted source!

Nor is this the only contradiction in which such a one is involved. How strange that the being who is lord and master of all the animal creation should be unable to govern himself! How strange that man's chief mark of superiority over the brutes should be the power of speech, and that he should use this power in such a way as to make it the instrument of his own

degradation, until he becomes lower than the brutes! They, whether tamed or untamed, unconsciously declare the glory of God; while he, with his noble powers of consciously and loyally praising Him, by his untamed tongue reviles those who are made after the image of God, and thus turns his own praises into blasphemies. Thus does man's rebellion reverse the order of nature and frustrate the will of God.

The writer of this Epistle has been accused of exaggeration. It has been urged that in this strongly worded paragraph he himself is guilty of that unchastened language which he is so eager to condemn; that the case is over-stated, and that the highly coloured picture is a caricature. Is there any thoughtful person of large experience that can honestly assent to this verdict? Who has not seen what mischief may be done by a single utterance of mockery, or enmity, or bravado; what confusion is wrought by exaggeration, innuendo, and falsehood; what suffering is inflicted by slanderous suggestions and statements; what careers of sin have been begun by impure stories and filthy jests? All these effects may follow, be it remembered, from a single utterance in each case, may spread to multitudes, may last for years. One reckless word may blight a whole life. "Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue" (Ecclus. xxviii. 18). And there are persons who habitually pour forth such things, who never pass a day without uttering what is unkind, or false, or impure. When we look around us, and see the moral ruin which in every class of society can be traced to reckless language—lives embittered, and blighted, and brutalized by words spoken and heard—can we wonder at the severe words of St. James, whose

experience was not very different from our own? Violent and uncharitable language had become one of the besetting sins of the Jews, and no doubt Jewish Christians were by no means free from it. "Curse the whisperer and the double-tongued," says the son of Sirach, "for such have destroyed many that were at peace" (Ecclus. xxviii. 13). To which the Syriac Version adds a clause not given in the Greek, nor in our Bibles: "Also *the third tongue*, let it be cursed; for it has laid low many corpses." This expression, "third tongue," seems to have come into use among the Jews in the period between the Old and New Testament. It means a slanderous tongue, and it is called "third" because it is fatal to three sets of people—to the person who utters the slander, to those who listen to it, and to those about whom it is uttered. "A third tongue hath tossed many to and fro, and driven them from nation to nation; and strong cities hath it pulled down, and houses of great men hath it overthrown" (Ecclus. xxviii. 14); where not only the Syriac, but the Greek, has the interesting expression "third tongue," a fact obscured in our version.

The "third tongue" is as common and as destructive now as when the son of Sirach denounced it, or St. James wrote against it with still greater authority; and we all of us can do a great deal to check the mischief, not merely by taking care that we keep our own tongues from originating evil, but by refusing to repeat, or if possible even to listen to, what the third tongue says. Our unwillingness to hear may be a discouragement to the speaker, and our refusal to repeat will at least lessen the evil of his tale. We shall have saved ourselves from becoming links in the chain of destruction.

There is one kind of sinful language to which the severe sayings of St. James specially apply, although the context seems to show that it was not specially in his mind—impure language. The foul tongue is indeed a "world of iniquity, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell." In no other case is the self-pollution of the speaker so manifest, or the injury to the listener so probable, so all but inevitable. Foul stories and impure jests and innuendoes, even more clearly than oaths and curses, befoul the souls of those who utter them, while they lead the hearers into sin. Such things rob all who are concerned in them, either as speakers or listeners, of two things which are the chief safeguards of virtue—the fear of God, and the fear of sin. They create an atmosphere in which men sin with a light heart, because the grossest sins are made to look not only attractive and easy, but amusing. What can be made to seem laughable is supposed to be not very serious. There is no more devilish act that a human being can perform than that of inducing others to believe that what is morally hideous and deadly is "pleasant to the eye and good for food." And this devil's work is sometimes done merely to raise a laugh, merely for something to say. Does any one seriously maintain that the language of St. James is at all too strong for such things as these? We hardly need his authority for the belief that a filthy tongue pollutes a man's whole being, and owes its inspiration to the evil one.

It is of angry, ill-tempered, unkind words that we do not believe this so readily. Words that are not false or calumnious, not running out into blasphemies and curses, and certainly not tainted with anything

like impurity, do not always strike us as being as harmful as they really are, not only to others, whom they irritate or sadden, but to ourselves, who allow our characters to be darkened by them. The captious word, that makes everything a subject for blame; the discontented word, that would show that the speaker is always being ill-treated; the biting word, that is meant to inflict pain; the sullen word, that throws a gloom over all who hear it; the provoking word, that seeks to stir up strife—of all these we are most of us apt to think too lightly, and need the stern warnings of St. James to remind us of their true nature and of their certain consequences. As regards *others*, such things wound tender hearts, add needlessly and enormously to the unhappiness of mankind, turn sweet affections sour, stifle good impulses, create and foster bad feelings, embitter in its smallest details the whole round of daily life. As regards *ourselves*, indulgence in such language weakens and warps our characters, blunts our sympathies, deadens our love for man, and therefore our love for God. "In particular it makes prayer either impossible or half useless. Whether we know it or not, the prayer that comes from a heart indulging in evil temper is hardly a prayer at all. We cannot really be face to face with God; we cannot really approach God as a Father; we cannot really feel like children kneeling at His feet; we cannot really be simply affectionate and truthful in what we say to Him, if irritation, discontent, or gloom, or anger, is busy at our breasts. An undisciplined temper shuts out the face of God from us. We may see His holy Law, but we cannot see Himself. We may think of Him as our Creator, our Judge, our Ruler, but we cannot think of Him as our Father,

nor approach Him with love."[1] "Salt water cannot yield sweet."

It was once pleaded on behalf of a man who had been criticized and condemned as unsatisfactory, that he was "a good man, all but his temper." "All but his temper!" was the not unreasonable reply; "as if temper were not nine tenths of religion." "If any man stumbleth not in word, the same is a *perfect* man."

[1] *Sermons preached in Rugby School Chapel*, by the Rev. Frederick Temple, D.D. (Macmillan, 1867), pp. 324, 325.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM BELOW.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed."—ST. JAMES iii. 13-16.

THIS section, which again looks at first sight like an abrupt transition to another subject, is found, upon closer examination, to grow quite naturally out of the preceding one. St. James has just been warning his readers against the lust of teaching and talking. Not many of them are to become teachers, for the danger of transgressing with the tongue, which is great in all of us, is in them at a maximum, because teachers must talk. Moreover, those who teach have greater responsibilities than those who do not; for by professing to instruct others they deprive themselves of the plea of ignorance, and they are bound to instruct by example of good deeds, as well as by precept of good words. From this subject he quite naturally passes on to speak of the difference between the wisdom from above and the wisdom from below; and the connexion is twofold. It is those who possess only the latter wisdom, and are proud of their miserable possession, who are so eager to make themselves of importance by

giving instruction; and it is the fatal love of talk, about which he has just been speaking so severely, that is one of the chief symptoms of the wisdom that is from below.

This paragraph is, in fact, simply a continuation of the uncompromising *attack upon sham religion* which is the main theme throughout a large portion of the Epistle. St. James first shows how useless it is to be an eager hearer of the word, without also being a doer of it. Next he exposes the inconsistency of loving one's neighbour as oneself if he chances to be rich, and neglecting or even insulting him if he is poor. From that he passes on to prove the barrenness of an orthodoxy which is not manifested in good deeds, and the peril of trying to make words a substitute for works. And thus the present section is reached. Throughout the different sections it is the empty religiousness which endeavours to avoid the *practice* of Christian virtue, on the plea of possessing zeal, or faith, or knowledge, that is mercilessly exposed and condemned. "Deed, deeds, deeds," is the cry of St. James; "these ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone." Without Christian practice, all the other good things which they possessed or professed were savourless salt.

"Who is wise and understanding among you?" (*τίς σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν*). The same two words meet us in the questionings of Job (xxviii. 12): "Where shall wisdom (*σοφία*) be found? and where is the place of understanding (*ἐπιστήμη*)?"[1] Of all the words which signify some kind of intellectual endowment, *e.g.* "prudence" (*φρόνησις*), "knowledge" (*γνῶσις*

[1] Comp. also Deut. i. 13, and iv. 6, where we have the same combination.

or ἐπίγνωσις), and "understanding" (ἐπιστήμη or σύνεσις), "wisdom" (σοφία) always ranks as highest. It indicates, as Clement of Alexandria defines it (*Strom.* I. v.), "the understanding of things human and Divine, and their causes." It is the word which expresses the typical wisdom of Solomon (Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31), the inspiration of St. Stephen (Acts vi. 10), and the Divine wisdom of Jesus Christ (Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 2; and comp. Luke xi. 49 with Matt. xxiii. 34). It is also employed in the heavenly doxologies which ascribe wisdom to the Lamb and to God (Rev. v. 12; vii. 12). St. James, therefore, quite naturally employs it to denote that excellent gift for which Christians are to pray with full confidence that it will be granted to them (i. 5, 6), and which manifests its heavenly character by a variety of good fruits (iii. 17).

Whether we are to understand any very marked difference between the two adjectives ("wise" and "understanding") used in the opening question, is a matter of little moment. The question taken as a whole amounts to this: Who among you professes to have superior knowledge, spiritual or practical? The main thing is not the precise scope of the question, but of the answer. Let every one who claims to have a superiority which entitles him to teach others *prove* his superiority by his good *life*. Once more it is a call for deeds, and not words—for conduct, and not professions. And St. James expresses this in a specially strong way. He might have said simply, "Let him by his conduct show his wisdom," just as he said above, "I by my works will show thee my faith." But he says, "Let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom." Thus the necessity for *practice* and *conduct*, as distinct from mere knowledge, is enforced twice over;

and besides that, the particular character of the conduct, the atmosphere in which it is to be exhibited, is also indicated. It is to be done "in *meekness* of wisdom." There are two characteristics here specified which we shall find are given as the infallible signs of the heavenly wisdom; and their opposites as signs of the other. The heavenly wisdom is fruitful of good deeds, and inspires those who possess it with gentleness. The other wisdom is productive of nothing really valuable, and inspires those who possess it with contentiousness. The spirit of strife, and the spirit of meekness; those are the two properties which chiefly distinguish the wisdom that comes from heaven from the wisdom that comes from hell.

This test is a very practical one, and we can apply it to ourselves as well as to others. How do we bear ourselves in argument and in controversy? Are we serene about the result, in full confidence that truth and right should prevail? Are we desirous that truth should prevail, even if that should involve *our* being proved to be in the wrong? Are we meek and gentle towards those who differ from us? or are we apt to lose our tempers, and become heated against our opponents? If the last is the case we have reason to doubt whether our wisdom is of the best sort. He who loses his temper in argument has begun to care more about himself, and less about the truth. He has become like the many would-be teachers rebuked by St. James; slow to hear, and swift to speak; unwilling to learn, and eager to dogmatize; much less ready to know the truth than to be able to say something, whether true or false.

The words "by his good life" (ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς) are a change made by the Revisers for other

reasons than the two which commonly weighed with them. As already stated (p. 150), their most valuable corrections are those which have been produced by the correction of the corrupt Greek text used by previous translators. Many more are corrections of mistranslations of the correct Greek text. The present change of "good *conversation*" into "good *life*" comes under neither of these two heads. It has been necessitated by a change which has taken place in the English language during the last two or three centuries. Words are constantly changing their meaning. "Conversation" is one of many English words which have drifted from their old signification; and it is one of several which have undergone change since the Authorized Version was published, and in spite of the enormous influence exercised by that version. For there can be no doubt that our Bible has retained words in use which would otherwise have been dropped, and has kept words to their old meaning which would otherwise have undergone a change. This latter influence, however, fails to make itself felt where the changed meaning still makes sense; and that is the case with the passages in which "conversation" (as a rendering of *ἀναστροφή*) occurs in the New Testament. "Conversation" was formerly a word of much wider meaning, and its gradual restriction to intercourse by word of mouth is unfortunate. Formerly it covered the whole of a man's *walk* in life (*Lebenswandel*), his going out and coming in, his behaviour or conduct. Wherever he "turned himself about" and lived, there he had his "conversation" (*conversatio*, from *conversari*, the exact equivalent of *ἀναστροφή*, from *ἀναστρέφεσθαι*). It was exactly the word that was required by the translators of the Greek Testament.

In the Septuagint it does not occur until the Apocrypha (Tobit iv. 14). But it causes serious misunderstanding to restrict the meaning of all the passages in which the word occurs to "conversation" in the modern sense, as if speaking were the only thing included; and the Revisers have done very rightly in removing this source of misunderstanding; but they have been unable to find any one expression which would serve the purpose, and hence have been compelled to vary the translation. Sometimes they give "manner of life" (Gal. i. 13; Eph. iv. 22; 1 Tim. iv. 12; 1 Peter i. 18; iii. 16; once "manner of living" (1 Peter i. 15); three times "behaviour" (1 Peter ii. 12; iii. 1, 2); three times "life" (Heb. xiii. 7; 2 Peter ii. 7; and here); and once "living" (2 Peter iii. 11). These different translations are worth collecting together, inasmuch as they give a good idea of the scope of "conversation" in the old sense,[1] which really represents the word used by St. James. That "conversation," with the modern associations which inevitably cling to it now, should be used in the passage before us, is singularly unfortunate. It not only misrepresents, but it almost reverses the meaning of the writer. So far from telling a man to show his wisdom by what he *says* in his intercourse with others, St. James rather exhorts him to show it by saying as little as possible, and doing a great deal. Let him show out of a noble life the conduct of a wise man in the gentle spirit which befits such. In modern language, let him in the fullest sense be a Christian gentleman.

"In *meekness* of wisdom." On this St. James lays

[1] That "conversation" should also have been used as a rendering of πολίτευμα (Phil. iii. 20; comp. i. 27) and τρόπος (Heb. xiii. 5) is very unfortunate

great stress. He has already told his readers to "receive with meekness the implanted word" (i. 21), and what implies the same thing, although the word is not used, to "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (i. 19). And in the passage before us he insists with urgent repetition upon the peaceable and gentle disposition of those who possess the wisdom from above (vv. 17, 18). The Christian grace of meekness is a good deal more than the rather second-rate virtue which Aristotle makes to be the mean between passionateness and impassionateness, and to consist in a due regulation of one's angry feelings (*Eth. Nic.* IV. v.). It includes submissiveness towards God, as well as gentleness towards men; and it exhibits itself in a special way in giving and receiving instruction, and in administering and accepting rebuke. It was, therefore, just the grace which the many would-be teachers, with their loud professions of correct faith and superior knowledge, specially needed to acquire. The Jew, with his national contempt for all who were not of the stock of Israel, was always prone to self-assertion, and these Christian Jews of the Dispersion had still to learn the spirit of their own psalms. "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way" (xxv. 9). "The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (xxxvii. 11). "The Lord upholdeth the meek" (cxlvii. 6). "He shall beautify the meek with salvation" (cxlix. 4). In all these passages the Septuagint has the adjective (πραεῖς) of the substantive used by St. James (πραΰτης). "But if," instead of this meekness, "ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not, and lie not against the truth." With a gentle severity St. James states as a mere supposi-

tion what he probably knew to be a fact. There was plenty of bitter zealousness and party spirit among them; and from this fact they could draw their own conclusions. It was an evil from which the Jews greatly suffered; and a few years later it hastened, if it did not cause, the overthrow of Jerusalem. This "jealousy" or zeal (ζῆλος) itself became a party name in the fanatical sect of the Zealots. It was an evil from which the primitive Church greatly suffered, as passages in the New Testament and in the sub-Apostolic writers prove; and can we say that it has ever become extinct? The same conclusion must be drawn now as then.

Jealousy or zeal may be a good or a bad thing according to the motive which inspires it. God Himself is called "a jealous God," and is said to be "clad with zeal as a cloak" (Isa. lix. 17), and to "take to Him jealousy for complete armour" (Wisdom v. 17). To Christ His disciples applied the words, "The zeal of Thine house shall eat me up" (John ii. 17). But more often the word has a bad signification. It indicates "zeal not according to knowledge" (Rom. x. 2), as when the high priest and Sadducees arrested the Apostles (Acts v. 17), or when Saul persecuted the Church (Phil. iii. 6). It is coupled with strife (Rom. xiii. 13), and is counted among the works of the flesh (Gal. v. 20). To make it quite plain that it is to be understood in a bad sense here, St. James adds the epithet "bitter" to it, and perhaps thereby recalls what he has just said about a mouth that utters both curses and blessings being as monstrous as a fountain spouting forth both bitter water and sweet. Moreover, he couples it with "faction" (ἐριθεία), a word which originally meant "working for hire," and especially "weaving

for hire" (Isa. xxxviii. 12), and thence any ignoble pursuit, especially political canvassing, intrigue, or factiousness (Arist. *Pol.* V. ii. 6; iii. 9; Rom. ii. 8; Phil. i. 16; ii. 3). This also St. Paul classes among the works of the flesh (Gal. v. 20). What St. James seems to refer to in these two words is bitter religious animosity; a hatred of error (or what is supposed to be such), manifesting itself, not in loving attempts to win over those who are at fault, but in bitter thoughts, and words, and party combinations.

"Glory not, and lie not against the truth." To glory with their tongues of their superior wisdom, while they cherished jealousy and faction in their hearts, was a manifest lie, a contradiction of what they must know to be the truth. In their fanatical zeal for the truth they were really lying against the truth, and ruining the cause which they professed to serve. Of how many a controversialist would that be true; and not only of those who have entered the lists against heresy and infidelity, but of those who are preaching a crusade against vice! "The whole Christianity of many a devotee consists only, we may say, in a bitter contempt for the sins of sinners, in a proud and loveless contention with what it calls the wicked world" (Stier).

"This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." The wisdom which is exhibited in such a thoroughly unchristian disposition is of no heavenly origin. It may be a proof of intellectual advantages of some kind, but it is not such as those who lack it need pray for (i. 5), nor such as God bestows liberally on all who ask in faith. And then, having stated what it is not, St. James tells in three words, which form a climax, what the wisdom on which they plume themselves, in

its nature, and sphere, and origin, really is. *It belongs to this world*, and has no connexion with heavenly things. *Its activity is in the lower part of man's nature*, his passions and his human intelligence, but it never touches his spirit. And in its origin and manner of working *it is demoniacal.* Not the gentleness of God's Holy Spirit, but the fierce recklessness of Satan's emissaries, inspires it. Just as there is a faith which a man may share with demons (ii. 19), and a tongue which is set on fire by hell (iii. 6), so there is a wisdom which is demoniacal in its source and in its activity.

The second of the three terms of condemnation used by St. James (ψυχικός) cannot be adequately rendered in English, for "psychic" or "psychical" would convey either no meaning or a wrong one. It does not occur in the Septuagint, but is found six times in the New Testament—four times in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (ii. 14; xv. 44, 46), where most English versions have "natural;" once in Jude (19), where Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan have "fleshly," the Rhemish, the Authorized, and the Revised "sensual;" and once here, where Genevan, Rhemish, Authorized, and Revised all give "sensual," the last placing "natural or animal" in the margin.[1] When man's nature is divided into body and soul, or flesh and spirit, every one understands that the body or flesh indicates the lower and material part, the soul or spirit the higher and immaterial part. But when a threefold division is made, into body, soul, and spirit, we are apt to allow the more simple and more familiar division to disturb our ideas. "Soul" is

[1] Purvey has "beastly" in all six places, which is a translation of the *animalis* of the Vulgate: "earthly, beastly, fiendly" is his triplet. See p. 453.

allowed to keep its old meaning, and to be understood as much more allied with "spirit" than with "body" or "flesh." This causes serious misunderstanding. When the soul is distinguished, not only from the flesh, but from the spirit, it represents a part of our nature which is much more closely connected with the former than with the latter. The "natural" or "sensual" man, though higher than the carnal man, who is the slave of his animal passions, is far below the spiritual man, who is ruled by the highest portion of his nature, which is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The natural man does not soar above the things of this world. His inspirations are not heavenly. "Of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh." The wisdom from above is heavenly, spiritual, Divine; the wisdom from below is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Does this seem to be an exaggeration? St. James is ready to justify his strong language. "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." And who are the authors of confusion and vile deeds? Are they to be found in heaven, or in hell? Is confusion, or order, the mark of God's work? If one wished to sum up succinctly the manner in which the activity of demons specially exhibits itself, could one do so better than by saying "confusion and every vile deed"? "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace," says St. Paul, using the very word that we have here (1 Cor. xiv. 33); and every one heartily assents to the doctrine. The reason and conscience of every man tell him that disorder cannot in origin be Divine; it is part of that ruin which Satanic influences have been allowed to make in a universe which was created "very good." Jealousy and faction mean anarchy; and anarchy means a moral chaos in which

every vile deed finds an opportunity. We know, therefore, what to think of the superior wisdom which is claimed by those in whose hearts jealousy and faction reign supreme. It may have a right to the name of wisdom, just as a correct belief about the nature of God may have a right to the name of faith, even when it remains barren, and therefore powerless to save. But an inspiration which prompts men to envy and intrigue, because, when many are rushing to occupy the post of teacher, others find a hearing more readily than themselves, is the inspiration of Cain and of Korah, rather than of Moses or of Daniel. The professed desire to offer service to God is really only a craving to obtain advancement for self. Self-seeking of this kind is always ruinous. It both betrays and aggravates the rottenness that lurks within. It was immediately after there had been a contention among the Apostles, "which of them was accounted to be greatest" (Luke xxii. 24), that they "all forsook Him and fled."

NOTE.—A portion of Dr. Newman's description of a gentleman will serve to illustrate what has been said above. It occurs in his *Discourses addressed to the Catholics of Dublin.* "It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who *never inflicts pain.* He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him, and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. He carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd. He guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate. He has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE.

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace."—St. James iii. 17, 18.

AT the beginning of his Epistle St. James exhorts those of his readers who feel their lack of wisdom to pray for it. It is one of those good and perfect gifts from above, which come down from the Father of lights, who "giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not" (i. 5, 17). He now, after having sketched its opposite, states, in a few clear, pregnant words, what the characteristics of this heavenly gift of wisdom are. In both passages he probably had in his mind, and wished to suggest to the minds of his readers, well-known utterances on the same subject in the Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, and Wisdom.

"My son, if thou cry after discernment, and lift up thy voice for understanding; if thou seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Prov. ii. 3-6).

Again, the magnificent "Praise of Wisdom" in the twenty-fourth chapter of Ecclesiasticus, in which Wis-

dom is made to tell her own glories, opens thus: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a cloud;" and it continues, "Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment, and He that created me caused my tabernacle to rest, and said, Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thine inheritance in Israel. Before time was, from the beginning, He created me, and until times cease I shall in nowise fail" (vv. 3, 8, 9).

And in the similar passage in the Book of Wisdom, in which the praise of Wisdom is put into the mouth of Solomon, he says, "Wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me. . . . She is the breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation from the glory of the Almighty: therefore doth no defiled thing fall into her. For she is the effulgence (*ἀπαύγασμα*: Heb. i. 3) of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness. And being one, she can do all things; and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new; and in all generations entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets. For God loveth nothing but him that dwelleth with wisdom" (vii. 22, 25-28).

Three thoughts are conspicuous in these passages. Wisdom originates with God. It is consequently pure and glorious. God bestows it upon His people. These thoughts reappear in St. James, and to them he adds another, which scarcely appears in the earlier writers. Wisdom is "peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits." In Proverbs we do indeed read that "all her paths are peace" (iii. 17); but the thought is not followed up. It does not seem to occur to the son of Sirach; and not one of the twenty-one epithets which the writer of Wisdom piles

up in praise of this heavenly gift (vii. 22, 23) touches upon its peaceable and placable nature. It was left to the Gospel to teach, both by the example of Christ and by the words of His Apostles, how inevitably the Divine wisdom produces, in those who possess it, gentleness, self-repression, and peace.

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated." The "first" and the "then" may be seriously misunderstood. St. James does *not* mean that the heavenly wisdom cannot be peaceable and gentle until all its surroundings have been made pure from everything that would oppose or contradict it; in other words, that the wise and understanding Christian will first free himself from the society of all whom he believes to be in error, and then, but not till then, will he be peaceable and gentle. That is, so long as folly and falsehood remain, they must be denounced, and made either to recant or to retire; for only when they have disappeared will wisdom show itself easy to be entreated. Purity, *i.e.* freedom from all that would dim the brightness of truth, must precede peace, and there can be no peace until it is obtained.

This interpretation contradicts the context, and makes St. James teach the opposite of what he says very plainly in the sentences which precede, and in those which follow, the words which we are considering. It tries to enlist him on the side of partisanship and persecution, at the very moment when he is pleading most earnestly against them. He is stating a logical, and not a chronological order, when he declares that true wisdom is "first pure, then peaceable." In its inmost being it is pure; among its very various external manifestations are the six or seven beneficent

qualities which follow the "then." If there were no one to be gentle to, no one coming to entreat, no one needing mercy, the wisdom from above would still be pure; therefore this quality comes first.

When the author of the Book of Wisdom says that wisdom is "a pure emanation from the glory of God: therefore can no defiled thing fall into her" (vii. 25), he is thinking of a pure stream, into which no foul ditch is able to empty its polluting contents, or of a pure ray of light, which does not admit of mixture with anything that would colour or darken it. He does not use the word for pure which we have here (ἁγνός), but one which signifies "unmixed," and hence "unsullied" (εἰλικρινής), and which occurs Phil. i. 10 and 2 Pet. iii. 1. The word used here by St. James is akin to "holy" (ἅγιος), and primarily signifies what is associated with religious awe (ἅγος), and hence "hallowed," especially by sacrifice. From this it became narrowed in meaning to what is free from the pollution of unchastity or bloodshed. As a Biblical word it sometimes has this narrow meaning; but generally it implies freedom from all stain of sin, and therefore is not far removed in meaning from "holy." But it is worth noting that whereas Christ and good men are spoken of as both pure and holy, yet God is called holy, but never pure. Divine holiness cannot be assailed by any polluting influence. Human holiness, even that of Christ, can be so assailed, and in resisting the assault it remains "pure."

In the passage before us "pure" must certainly not be limited to mean simply "chaste." The word "sensual," applied to the wisdom from below, does not mean unchaste, but living wholly in the world of sense; and the purity of the heavenly wisdom does not con-

sist merely in victory over temptations of the flesh, but in freedom from worldly and low motives. Its aim is that truth should become known and prevail, and it condescends to no ignoble arts in prosecuting this aim. Contradiction does not ruffle it, and hostility does not provoke it to retaliate, because its motives are thoroughly disinterested and pure. Thus, its peaceable and placable qualities flow out of its purity. It is "*first* pure, *then* peaceable." It is because the man who is inspired with it has no ulterior selfish ends to serve that he is gentle, sympathetic, and considerate towards those who oppose him. He strives, not for victory over his opponents, but for truth both for himself and for them ; and he knows what it costs to arrive at truth. We have a noble illustration of this temper in some of the opening passages of St. Augustine's treatise against the so-called *Fundamental Letter* of Manichæus. He begins thus :—

"My prayer to the one true God Almighty, of whom, and through whom, and in whom are all things, has been and is, that in refuting and disproving the heresy of you Manichæans, to which you adhere perchance more through thoughtlessness than evil intent, He would give me a mind composed and tranquil, and aiming rather at your amendment than your discomfiture. . . . It has been our business, therefore, to prefer and choose the better part, that we might have an opportunity for your amendment, not in contention, and strife, and persecutions, but in gentle consolation, affectionate exhortation, and quiet discussion ; as it is written, The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, teachable, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves. . . .

"Let those rage against you who know not with what toil truth is found, and how difficult it is to avoid

errors. . . . Let those rage against you who know not with how great difficulty the eye of the inner man is made whole, so that it can behold its Sun. . . . Let those rage against you who know not with what sighs and groans it is made possible, in however small a degree, to comprehend God. Finally, let those rage against you who have never been deceived by such an error as that whereby they see you deceived. . . .

"Let neither of us say that he has already found the truth. Let us seek it as if it were unknown to us both. For it can be sought for with zeal and unanimity only if there be no rash assumption that it has been found and is known."

And to the same effect, although in a different key, a critical writer of our own day has remarked that "by an intellect which is habitually filled with the wisdom which is from heaven, in all its length and breadth, 'objections' against religion are perceived at once to proceed from imperfect apprehension. Such an intellect cannot rage against those who give words to such objections. It sees that the objectors do but intimate the partial character of their own knowledge." [1]

It will be observed that while the writer just quoted speaks about the *intellect*, St. James speaks about the *heart*. The difference is not accidental, and it is significant of a difference in the point of view. The modern view of wisdom is that it is a matter which mainly consists in the strengthening and enrichment of the intellectual powers. Increase of capacity for acquiring and retaining knowledge; increase in the possession of knowledge: this is what is meant by growth in wisdom. And by knowledge is meant acquaintance with the

[1] Mark Pattison, *Essays: Life of Bishop Warburton*, vol. ii., pp. 163, 164 (Oxford: 1889).

nature and history of man, and with the nature and history of the universe. All this is the sphere of the intellect rather than of the heart. The purification and development of the moral powers, if not absolutely excluded from the scope of wisdom, is commonly left in the background and almost out of sight. What St. James says here is fully admitted : the highest wisdom keeps a man from the bitterness of party spirit. But why ? Because his superior intelligence and information tell him that the opposition of those who dissent from him is the result of ignorance, which requires, not insult and abuse, but instruction. St. James does not dissent from this view, but he adds to it. There are further and higher reasons why the truly wise man does not rail at others, or try to browbeat and silence them. Because, while he abhors folly, he loves the fool, and would win him over from his foolish ways ; because he desires not only to impart knowledge, but to increase virtue ; and because he knows that strife means confusion, and that gentleness is the parent of peace. Christians are charged to be " wise as serpents, but *harmless as doves.*"

The Scriptural view of wisdom does not contradict the modern one, but it is taken from the other side. In it the education of the moral and spiritual powers is the main thing, while intellectual advancement is in the background or out of sight. There is nothing in the teaching of Christ or his Apostles that is hostile to intellectual progress ; but neither by His example, nor by the directions which His disciples received or delivered, do we find that culture was regarded as part of, or necessary to, or even a very desirable companion for, the Gospel. Neither Christ nor any one of His immediate followers came forward as a great promoter

of intellectual pursuits. Why is this? It would perhaps be a sound and sufficient answer to say, that valuable as such work would have been, there was much more serious and important work to be done. To convert men from sin to righteousness was far more urgent than to improve their minds. But there is more to be said than this. That perverse generation had to "turn, and become as little children," before it could enter into the kingdom of heaven. To develop a man's intellectual powers is not always the best way to make him "humble himself as a little child." Increase of knowledge may make a Newton feel like a child picking up pebbles on the shore of truth, but it is apt to make "the natural man" less childlike. But for no one, whether catechumen, or convert, or mature Christian, can the cultivation of his intellect be as pressing a duty as the cultivation of his heart. "To speak with the tongues of men and of angels," and to "know all mysteries and all knowledge," is as nothing in comparison with love. And it is in some measure possible to see why this is so. Man's moral nature certainly suffered, and ruinously suffered, at the Fall. It is not so certain that his intellectual nature suffered also. If it did suffer, it suffered *through* the moral nature, because depravation of the heart depraved the brain. In neither case would there be any necessity for the Gospel to pay special attention to the regeneration of the intellect. If man's intellect was unscathed by his fall from innocence, it could continue its natural development, and go on from strength to strength towards perfection. If, however, the loss of innocence has entailed a loss of mental capacity, then the wound inflicted on the intellectual nature through the moral nature must be healed in the same way. First purify

the heart and regenerate the will, and then the recovery of the intellect will follow in due course.[1] It is easy to reach the intellect through the heart, and this is what the wisdom that is from above aims at doing. If we begin with the intellect, we shall very likely end there; and in that case the man is not raised from his degradation, but equipped with additional powers of mischief. "Into a soul that deviseth evil, wisdom will not enter, nor yet dwell in a body that is sunk in sin" (Wisdom i. 4).

"Full of mercy and good fruits." The wisdom from above is not only peaceable, reasonable, and conciliatory, when under provocation or criticism, it is also eager to take the initiative in doing all the good in its power to those whom it can reach or influence. Thus it goes hand in hand with that pure and undefiled religion which visits "the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (i. 27). Just as St. James has no sympathy with a faith which does not clothe the naked and feed the hungry, and offer of its best to God (ii. 15, 16, 21), nor with a tongue which blesses God and curses men (ii. 9), so he has no belief in the heavenly character of a wisdom which holds itself aloof in calm superiority to all cavil and complaint, with a condescending air of passionless impartiality. The intellectual miser, who gloats over the treasures of his own accumulated knowledge, and smiles with lofty indifference upon the criticisms and squabbles of the imperfectly instructed, has no share in the wisdom that is from above. He is peaceful and moderate, not out of love and sympathy, but because his time is too precious to be wasted in barren controversy, and because he is too proud to

[1] See Jellett's *Thoughts on the Christian Life*, p. 49 (Dublin: 1884).

place himself on a level with those who would dispute with him. No selfish arrogance of this kind has any place in the character of the truly wise. His wisdom not only enlightens his intellect, but warms his heart and strengthens his will. He believes that "the wise man alone is king," and that "the wise man alone is happy," yet not because he has the crown of knowledge and abundance of intellectual enjoyment, but because he "fulfils the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (ii. 8), and because happiness is to be found in promoting the happiness of others.

"Without variance, without hypocrisy." These are the last two of the goodly qualities which St. James gives as marks of the heavenly wisdom. Similarity in sound, which cannot well be preserved in English, has evidently had something to do with their selection (ἀδιάκριτος, ἀνυπόκριτος). The first of the two has perplexed translators, and the English versions give us considerable choice: "without variance," "without wrangling," "without partiality," "without doubtfulness," "without judging." Purvey has for the *two* epithets "deeming without feigning," following the Sixtine edition of the Vulgate, which has *judicans sine simulatione*, instead of *non judicans, sine simulatione*. The word occurs nowhere else either in the Old or in the New Testament; but it is cognate with a word which St. James uses twice at the beginning of this Epistle (διακρινόμενος: i. 6), and which is there rendered "doubting" or "wavering." Of the various possible meanings of the word before us we may therefore prefer "without doubtfulness." The wisdom from above is unwavering, steadfast, single-minded. Thus Ignatius charges the Magnesians (xv.) to "possess an unventuring spirit" (ἀδιάκριτον πνεῦμα), and tells the

Trallians (i.) that he has "learned that they have a mind unblameable and unwavering in patience" (*ἀδιάκριτον ἐν ὑπομονῇ*). And Clement of Alexandria (*Pæd.* II. iii., p. 190) speaks of "unwavering faith" (*ἀδιακρίτῳ πίστει*), and a few lines farther on he reminds his readers, in words that suit our present subject, that "wisdom is not bought with earthly coin, nor is sold in the market, but in heaven." If he had said that wisdom is not sold in the market, but *given* from heaven, he would have made the contrast both more pointed and more true.

"The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace." The Greek may mean either "*for* them that make peace," or "*by* them that make peace;" and we need not attempt to decide. In either case it is the peacemakers who sow the seed whose fruit is righteousness, and the peacemakers who reap this fruit. The whole process begins, progresses, and ends in peace.

It is evident that the heavenly wisdom is pre-eminently a *practical* wisdom. It is not purely or mainly intellectual; it is not speculative; it is not lost in contemplation. Its object is to increase holiness rather than knowledge, and happiness rather than information. Its atmosphere is not controversy and debate, but gentleness and peace. It is full, not of sublime theories or daring hypotheses, but of mercy and good fruits. It can be confident without wrangling, and reserved without hypocrisy. It is the twin sister of that heavenly love which "envieth not, vaunteth not itself, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh no account of evil."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ST. JAMES AND PLATO ON LUSTS AS THE CAUSES OF STRIFE; THEIR EFFECT ON PRAYER.

"Whence come wars, and whence come fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your pleasures which war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures."—ST. JAMES iv. 1-13.

THE change from the close of the third chapter to the beginning of the fourth is startling. St. James has just been sketching with much beauty the excellences of the heavenly wisdom, and especially its marked characteristic of always tending to produce an atmosphere of peace, in which the seed that produces the fruit of righteousness will grow and flourish. Gentleness, good-will, mercy, righteousness, peace—these form the main features of his sketch. And then he abruptly turns upon his readers with the question, "Whence come wars, and whence come fightings among you?"

The sudden transition from the subject of peace to the opposite is deliberate. Its object is to startle and awaken the consciences of those who are addressed. The wisdom from below produces bitter jealousy and faction; the wisdom from above produces gentleness and peace. Then how is to be explained the origin of the wars and fightings which prevail among the twelve

tribes of the Dispersion? That ought to set them thinking. These things must be traced to causes which are earthly or demoniacal rather than heavenly; and if so, those who are guilty of them, instead of contending for the office of teaching others, ought to be seriously considering how to correct themselves. Here, again, there is the strangest contradiction between their professions and their practice. Clement of Rome seems to have this passage in his mind when he writes (*c.* A.D. 97) to the Church of Corinth, "Wherefore are there strifes and wraths, and factions and divisions, and war among you?" (xlvi.).

"Wars" (πόλεμοι) and "fightings" (μάχαι) are not to be understood literally. When the text is applied to international warfare between Christian states in modern times, or to any case of civil war, it may be so interpreted without doing violence to its spirit; but that is not the original meaning of the words. There was no civil war among the Jews at this time, still less among the Jewish Christians. St. James is referring to private quarrels and law-suits, social rivalries and factions, and religious controversies. The subject-matter of these disputes and contentions is not indicated, because that is not what is denounced. It is not for having differences about this or that, whether rights of property, or posts of honour, or ecclesiastical questions, that St. James rebukes them, but for the rancorous, greedy, and worldly spirit in which their disputes are conducted. Evidently the lust of possession is among the things which produce the contentions. Jewish appetite for wealth is at work among them.

It was stated in a former chapter (p. 48) that, there are places in this Epistle in which St. James seems to go beyond the precise circle of readers ad-

dressed in the opening words, and to glance at the whole Jewish nation, whether outside Palestine or not, and whether Christian or not. These more comprehensive addresses are more frequent in the second half of the Epistle than in the first, and one is inclined to believe that the passage before us is one of them. In that case we may believe that the bitter contentions which divided Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Essenes, Zealots, and Samaritans from one another are included in the wars and fightings, as well as the quarrels which disgraced Christian Jews. In any case we see that the Jews who had entered the Christian Church had brought with them that contentious spirit which was one of their national characteristics. Just as St. Paul has to contend with Greek love of faction in his converts at Corinth, so St. James has to contend with a similar Jewish failing among the converts from Judaism. And it would seem as if he hoped through these converts to reach many of those who were not yet converted. What he wrote to Christian synagogues would possibly be heard of and noted in synagogues which were not Christian. At any rate this Epistle contains ample evidence that the grievous scandals which amaze us in the early history of the Apostolic Churches of Corinth, Galatia, and Ephesus were not peculiar to converts from heathenism: among the Christians of the circumcision, who had had the advantage of life-long knowledge of God and of His law, there were evils as serious, and sometimes very similar in kind. The notion that the Church of the Apostolic age was in a condition of ideal perfection is a beautiful but baseless dream.[1]

"Whence wars, and whence fightings among you?

[1] See the volume on the *Pastoral Epistles* in this series, pp. 264, 265.

come they not hence, even of your pleasures which war in your members?" By a common transposition, St. James, in answering his own question, puts the pleasures which excite and gratify the lusts instead of the lusts themselves, in much the same way as we use "drink" for intemperance, and "gold" for avarice. These lusts for pleasures have their quarters or camp in the members of the body, *i.e.* in the sensual part of man's nature. But they are there, not to rest, but to make war, to go after, and seize, and take for a prey that which has roused them from their quietude and set them in motion. There the picture, as drawn by St. James, ends. St. Paul carries it a stage farther, and speaks of the "different law in my members, warring *against the law of my mind*" (Rom. vii. 23). St. Peter does the same, when he beseeches his readers, "as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war *against the soul*" (1 Peter ii. 11); and some commentators would supply either "against the mind" or "against the soul" here. But there is no need to supply anything, and if one did supply anything the "wars and fightings *among you*" would rather lead us to understand that the lusts in each one's members make war against everything which interferes with their gratification, and such would be the possessions and desires of other people. This completion of St. James's picture agrees well also with what follows: "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill and covet, and cannot obtain." But it is best to leave the metaphor just where he leaves it, without adding anything. And the fact that he does not add "against the mind" or "against the soul" is some slight indication that he had not seen either the passage in Romans or in the Epistle of St. Peter. (See above, p. 57.)

In the *Phædo* of Plato (66, 67) there is a beautiful passage, which presents some striking coincidences with the words of St. James. "Wars, and factions, and fightings have no other source than the body and its lusts. For it is for the getting of wealth that all our wars arise, and we are compelled to get wealth because of our body, to whose service we are slaves; and in consequence we have no leisure for philosophy, because of all these things. And the worst of all is that if we get any leisure from it, and turn to some question, in the midst of our inquiries the body is everywhere coming in, introducing turmoil and confusion, and bewildering us, so that by it we are prevented from seeing the truth. But indeed it has been proved to us that if we are ever to have pure knowledge of anything we must get rid of the body, and with the soul by itself must behold things by themselves. *Then*, it would seem, we shall obtain the wisdom which we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers; when we are dead, as the argument shows, but in this life not. For if it be impossible while we are in the body to have pure knowledge of anything, then of two things one—either knowledge is not to be obtained at all, or after we are dead; for then the soul will be by itself, apart from the body, but before that not. And in this life, it would seem, we shall make the nearest approach to knowledge if we have no communication or fellowship whatever with the body, beyond what necessity compels, and are not filled with its nature, but remain pure from its taint, until God Himself shall set us free. And in this way shall we be pure, being delivered from the foolishness of the body, and shall be with other like souls, and shall know of ourselves all that is clear and cloudless, and that is perhaps all one with the truth."

Plato and St. James are entirely agreed in holding that wars and fightings are caused by the lusts that have their seat in the body, and that this condition of fightings without, and lusts within, is quite incompatible with the possession of heavenly wisdom. But there the agreement between them ceases. The conclusion which Plato arrives at is that the philosopher must, so far as is possible, neglect and excommunicate his body, as an intolerable source of corruption, yearning for the time when death shall set him free from the burden of waiting upon this obstacle between his soul and the truth. Plato has no idea that the body may be sanctified here and glorified hereafter; he regards it simply as a necessary evil, which may be minimized by watchfulness, but which can in no way be turned into a blessing. The blessing will come when the body is annihilated by death. St. James, on the contrary, exhorts us to cut ourselves off, not from the body, but from friendship with the world. If we resist the evil one, who tempts us through our ferocious lusts, he will flee from us. God will give us the grace we need, if we pray for that rather than for pleasures. He will draw nigh to us if we draw nigh to Him; and if we purify our hearts He will make His Spirit to dwell in them. Even in this life the wisdom that is from above is attainable, and where that has found a home factions and fightings cease. When the passions cease to war, those who have hitherto been swayed by their passions will cease to war also. But those whom St. James addresses are as yet very far from this blessed condition.

"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war." In short, sharp, telling sentences he puts forth the items of his indictment; but

it is not easy to punctuate them satisfactorily, nor to decide whether "ye kill" is to be understood literally or not. In none of the English versions does the punctuation seem to bring out a logical sequence of clauses. The following arrangement is suggested for consideration: "Ye lust, and have not; ye kill. And ye covet, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war." In this way we obtain two sentences of similar meaning, which exactly balance one another. "Ye lust, and have not," corresponds with, "Ye covet, and cannot obtain," and "ye kill" with "ye fight and war;" and in each sentence the last clause is the consequence of what precedes. "Ye lust, and have not; *therefore* ye kill." "Ye covet, and cannot obtain; *therefore* ye fight and war." This grouping of the clauses yields good sense, and does no violence to the Greek.

"Ye lust, and have not; therefore ye kill." Is "kill" to be understood literally? That murder, prompted by avarice and passion, was common among the Christian Jews of the Dispersion, is quite incredible. That monstrous scandals occurred in the Apostolic age, especially among Gentile converts, who supposed that the freedom of the Gospel meant lax morality, is unquestionable; but that these scandals ever took the form of indifference to human life we have no evidence. And it is specially improbable that murder would be frequent among those who, before they became Christians, had been obedient to the Mosaic Law. St. James may have a single case in his mind, like that of the incestuous marriage at Corinth; but in that case he would probably have expressed himself differently. Or again, as was suggested above, he may in this section be addressing the whole Jewish race, and not merely those who had become converts to Christianity;

and in that case he may be referring to the brigandage and assassination which a combination of causes, social, political, and religious, had rendered common among the Jews, especially in Palestine, at this time. Of this evil we have plenty of evidence both in the New Testament and in Josephus. Barabbas and the two robbers who were crucified with Christ are instances in the Gospels. And with them we may put the parable of the man "who fell among robbers," and was left half-dead between Jerusalem and Jericho; for no doubt the parable, like all Christ's parables, is founded on fact, and is no mere imaginary picture. In the Acts we have Theudas with his four hundred followers (B.C. 4), Judas of Galilee (A.D. 6), and the Egyptian with his four thousand "Assassins," or *Sicarii* (A.D. 58); to whom we may add the forty who conspired to assassinate St. Paul (v. 36, 37; xxi. 38; xxiii. 12-21). And Josephus tells us of another Theudas, who was captured and put to death with many of his followers by the Roman Procurator Cuspius Fadus (*c.* A.D. 45); and he also states that about fifty years earlier, under Varus, there were endless disorders in Judæa, sedition and robbery being almost chronic. The brigands inflicted a certain amount of damage on the Romans, but the murders which they committed were on their fellow-countrymen the Jews (*Ant.* XVII. x. 4, 8; XX. v. 1).[1]

In either of these ways, therefore, the literal interpretation of "kill" makes good sense; and we are not justified in saying, with Calvin, that "kill in no way

[1] If φονεύετε is taken with what follows, it is best to render φονεύετε καὶ ζηλοῦτε "Ye act as Assassins and Zealots," referring both words to the fanatics who a little later killed James himself, and were the hasteners of the downfall of Jerusalem.

suits the context." Calvin, with Erasmus, Beza, Hornejus, and others, adopts the violent expedient of correcting the Greek from "kill" (*φονεύετε*) to "envy" (*φθονεῖτε*), a reading for which not a single MS., version, or Father can be quoted. It is accepted, however, by Tyndale and Cranmer and in the Genevan Bible, all of which have, "Ye *envy* and have indignation, and cannot obtain." Wiclif and the Rhemish of course hold to the *occiditis* of the Vulgate, the one with "slay," and the other with "kill."

But although the literal interpretation yields good sense, it is perhaps not the best interpretation. It was pointed out above that "ye kill" balances "ye fight and war," and that "wars and fightings" evidently are *not* to be understood literally, as the context shows. If then, "ye fight and war" means "ye quarrel, and dispute, and intrigue, and go to law with one another," ought not "ye kill" to be explained in a similar way? Christ had said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. v. 21, 22). And St. John tells us that "every one who hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15). "Every one who hateth" (*πᾶς ὁ μισῶν*) is an uncompromising expression, and it covers all that St. James says here. Just as the cherished lustful thought is adultery in the heart (Matt. v. 28), so cherished hatred is murder in the heart.

But there is an explanation, half literal and half metaphorical, which is well worth considering. It has been pointed out how frequently St. James seems to have portions of the Book of Ecclesiasticus in his mind.

We read there that "the bread of the needy is the life of the poor: he that defraudeth him thereof is a man of blood. He that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him (*φονεύων*); and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a blood-shedder" (xxxiv. 21, 22). If St. James was familiar with these words, and still more if he could count on his readers also being familiar with them, might he not mean, "Ye lust, and have not; and then, to gratify your desire, you deprive the poor of his living"? Even Deut. xxiv. 6 might suffice to give rise to such a strong method of expression: "No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge." Throughout this section the language used is strong, as if the writer felt very strongly about the evils which he condemns.

While "ye lust, and have not, and thereupon take a man's livelihood from him," would refer specially to *possessions*, "Ye covet (or envy) and cannot obtain, and thereupon fight and war," might refer specially to *honours*, *posts*, and *party advantages*. The word rendered "covet" (*ζηλοῦτε*) is that which describes the thing which love never does: "Love *envieth* not" (1 Cor. xiii. 4). When St. James was speaking of the wisdom from below (iii. 14-16) the kind of quarrels which he had chiefly in view were party controversies, as was natural after treating just before of sins of the tongue. Here the wars and fightings are not so much about matters of controversy as those things which minister to a man's "pleasures," his avarice, his sensuality, and his ambition.

How is it that they have not all that they want? How is that there is any need to despoil others, or to contend fiercely with them for possession? "Ye have

not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss." *That* is the secret of these gnawing wants and lawless cravings. They do not try to supply their needs in a way that would cause loss to no one, viz. by prayer to God; they prefer to employ violence and craft against one another. Or if they do pray for the supply of their earthly needs, they obtain nothing, because they pray with evil intent. To pray without the spirit of prayer is to court failure. That God's will may be done, and His Name glorified, is the proper end of all prayer. To pray simply that our wishes may be satisfied is not a prayer to which fulfilment has been promised; still less can this be the case when our wishes are for the gratification of our lusts. Prayer for advance in holiness we may be sure is in accordance with God's will. About prayer for earthly advantages we cannot be sure; but we may pray for such things so far as they are to His glory and our own spiritual welfare. Prayer for earthly goods, which are to be used as instruments, not of His pleasure, but of ours, we may be sure is not in accordance with His will. To such a prayer we need expect no answer, or an answer which at the same time is a judgment; for the fulfilment of an unrighteous prayer is sometimes its most fitting punishment.

St. James is not blaming his readers for asking God to give them worldly prosperity. About the lawfulness of praying for temporal blessings, whether for ourselves or for others, there is no question. St. John prays that Gaius "in all things may prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospereth" (3 John 2), and St. James plainly implies that when one has temporal needs one *ought* to bring them before God in prayer, only with a right purpose and in a right spirit. In the

next chapter he specially recommends prayer for the recovery of the sick. The asking amiss consists not in asking for temporal things, but in seeking them for a wrong purpose, viz. that they may be squandered in a life of self-indulgence. The right purpose is to enable us to serve God better. Temporal necessities are often a hindrance to good service, and then it is right to ask God to relieve them. But in all such things the rule laid down by Christ is the safe one, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." A life consecrated to the service of God is the best prayer for temporal blessings. Prayer that is offered in a grasping spirit is like that of the bandit for the success of his raids.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SEDUCTIONS OF THE WORLD, AND THE JEALOUSY OF THE DIVINE LOVE.

"Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God. Or think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the Spirit which He made to dwell in us long unto envying? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the Scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."—St. James iv. 4-6.

THE Revisers are certainly right in rejecting, without even mention in the margin, the reading, "Ye *adulterers and* adulteresses." The difficulty of the revised reading pleads strongly in its favour, and the evidence of MSS. and versions is absolutely decisive. The interpolation of the masculine was doubtless made by those who supposed that the term of reproach was to be understood literally, and who thought it inexplicable that St. James should confine his rebuke to female offenders.

But the context shows that the term is not to be understood literally. It is not a special kind of sensuality, but greed and worldliness generally, that the writer is condemning. It is one of the characteristics of the letter that being addressed to Jewish, and not Gentile converts, and occasionally to Jews whether Christians or not, it says very little about the sins of

the flesh; and "adulteresses" here is no exception. The word is used in its common Old Testament sense of spiritual adultery—unfaithfulness to Jehovah regarded as the Husband of His people. "They that are far from Thee shall perish: Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from Thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 27). "Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt" (Ezek. xxiii. 27). "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not My wife, neither am I her Husband" (Hos. ii. 2). The fifty-seventh chapter of Isaiah contains a terrible working out of this simile; and indeed the Old Testament is full of it. Our Lord is probably reproducing it when he speaks of the Jews of His own time as an "adulterous and sinful generation" (Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4; Mark viii. 38). And we find it again in the Apocalypse (ii. 22).

But why does St. James use the feminine? Had he accused his readers of adultery, or called them an adulterous generation, the meaning would have been clear enough. What is the exact meaning of "Ye adulteresses"?

St. James wishes to bring home to those whom he is addressing that not only the Christian Church as a whole, or the chosen people as a whole, is espoused to God, but that each individual soul stands to Him in the relation of a wife to her husband. It is not merely the case that they belong to a generation which in the main has been guilty of unfaithfulness, and that in this guilt they share; but each of them, taken one by one, has in his or her own person committed this sin against the Divine Spouse. The sex of the person does not affect the relationship: any soul that has been wedded to God, and has then transferred its affection and

allegiance to other beings, is an unfaithful wife. St. James, with characteristic simplicity, directness, and force, indicates this fact by the stern address, "Ye adulteresses."

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" He implies that they might know this, and that they can scarcely help doing so; it is so obvious that to love His opponent is to be unfaithful and hostile to Him. At the beginning of the section St. James had asked whence came the miserable condition in which his readers were found; and he replied that it came from their own desires, which they tried to gratify by intrigue and violence, instead of resorting to prayer; or else from the carnal aims by which they turned their prayers into sin. Here he puts the same fact in a somewhat different way. This vehement pursuit of their own pleasures, in word, and deed, and even in prayer—what is it but a desertion of God for Mammon, a sacrifice of the love of God to the friendship (such as it is) of the world? It is a base yielding to seductions which ought to have no attractiveness, for they involve the unfaithfulness of a wife and the treason of a subject. There can be no true and loyal affection for God while some other than God is loved, and not loved for His sake. If a woman "shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery" (Mark xi. 12); and if a soul shall put away its God, and marry another, it committeth adultery. A wife who cultivates friendship with one who is trying to seduce her becomes the enemy of her husband; and every Christian and Jew ought to know "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God."

St. John tells us (and the words are probably not his, but Christ's) that "God loved the world" (John iii. 16).

He also charges us *not* to love the world (1 John ii. 15). And here St. James tells us that to be friends with the world is to be the enemy of God. It is obvious that "the world" which God loves is not identical with "the world" which we are told not to love. "World" (κόσμος) is a term which has various meanings in Scripture, and we shall go seriously astray if we do not carefully distinguish them. Sometimes it means the whole universe in its order and beauty; as when St. Paul says, "For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made" (Rom. i. 20). Sometimes it means this planet, the earth; as when the evil one showed to Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (Matt. iv. 8). Again, it means the inhabitants of the earth; as when Christ is said to "take away the sin of the world" (John i. 2; 1 John iv. 14). Lastly, it means those who are alienated from God—unbelievers, faithless Jews and Christians, and especially the great heathen organization of Rome (John viii. 23; xii. 31). Thus a word which originally signified the natural order and beauty of creation comes to signify the unnatural disorder and hideousness of creatures who have rebelled against their Creator. The world which the Father loves is the whole race of mankind, His creatures and His children. The world which we are not to love is that which prevents us from loving Him in return, His rival and His enemy. It is from this world that the truly religious man keeps himself unspotted (i. 25). Sinful men, with their sinful lusts, keeping up a settled attitude of disloyalty and hostility to God, and handing this on as a living tradition, is what St. Paul, and St. James, and St. John mean by "the world."

This world has the devil for its ruler (John xiv. 30). It lies wholly in the power of the evil one (1 John v. 19). It cannot hate Christ's enemies, for the very reason that it hates Him (John vii. 7). And for the same reason it hates all those whom He has chosen out of its midst (xv. 18, 19). Just as there is a Spirit of God, which leads us into all the truth, so there is a "spirit of the world," which leads to just the opposite (1 Cor. ii. 12). This world, with its lusts, is passing away (1 John ii. 17), and its very sorrow worketh death (2 Cor. vii. 10). "The world is human nature, sacrificing the spiritual to the material, the future to the present, the unseen and the eternal to that which touches the senses and which perishes with time. The world is a mighty flood of thoughts, feelings, principles of action, conventional prejudices, dislikes, attachments, which have been gathering around human life for ages, impregnating it, impelling it, moulding it, degrading it. Of the millions of millions of human beings who have lived, nearly every one probably has contributed something, his own little addition, to the great tradition of materialized life which St. [James] calls the world. Every one, too, must have received something from it. According to his circumstances the same man acts upon the world, or in turn is acted on by it. And the world at different times wears different forms. Sometimes it is a solid compact mass, an organization of pronounced ungodliness. Sometimes it is a subtle, thin, hardly suspected influence, a power altogether airy and impalpable, which yet does most powerfully penetrate, inform, and shape human life."[1]

There is no sin in a passionate love of the ordered

[1] Liddon, *Easter Sermons*, vol. ii., pp. 56, 57 (Rivingtons, 1885).

beauty and harmony of the universe, as exhibited either in this planet or in the countless bodies which people the immensity of space; no sin in devoting the energies of a lifetime to finding out all that can be known about the laws and conditions of nature in all its complex manifestations. Science is no forbidden ground to God's servants, for all truth is God's truth, and to learn it is a revelation of Himself. If only it be studied as His creature, it may be admired and loved without any disloyalty to Him.

Still less is there any sin in "the enthusiasm of humanity," in a passionate zeal for the amelioration of the whole human race. A consuming love for one's fellow-men is so far from involving enmity to God that it is impossible to have any genuine love of God without it. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John iv. 20). The love of the world which St. James condemns is a passion which more than anything else renders a love of mankind impossible. Its temper is selfishness, and the principle of its action is the conviction that every human being is actuated by purely selfish motives. It has no belief in motives of which it has no experience either in itself or in those among whom it habitually moves. Next to a cultivation of the love of God, a cultivation of the love of man is the best remedy for the deadly paralysis of the heart which is the inevitable consequence of *choosing* to be a friend of the world.

This choice is a very important element in the matter. It is lost in the Authorized Version, but is rightly restored by the Revisers. "Whosoever, therefore, *would be* (*βουληθῇ εἶναι*) a friend of the world *maketh himself* (*καθίσταται*) an enemy of God." It is

useless for him to plead that he has no wish to be hostile to God. He has of his own free will adopted a condition of life which of necessity involves hostility to Him. And he has full opportunity of knowing this; for although the world may try to deceive him by confusing the issue, God does not. The world may assure him that there is no need of any choice: he has no need to abandon God; it is quite easy to serve God, and yet remain on excellent terms with the world. But God declares that the choice must be made, and that it is absolute and exclusive. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart and with *all* thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deut. x. 12, 13; comp. vi. 5 and xxx. 6).

The next two verses are a passage of known difficulty, the most difficult in this Epistle, and one of the most difficult in the whole of the New Testament. In the intensity of his detestation of the evil against which he is inveighing, St. James has used condensed expressions which can be understood in a variety of ways, and it is scarcely possible to decide which of the three or four possible meanings is the one intended. But the question has been obscured by the suggestion of explanations which are not tenable. The choice lies between those which are given in the margin of the Revised Version and the one before us in the text; for we may safely discard all those which depend upon the reading "*dwelleth* in us" (κατῴκησεν), and we must stand by the reading "*made to dwell* in us" (κατῴκισεν).

The questions which cannot be answered with

certainty are these: 1. Are two Scriptures quoted, or only one? and if two are quoted, where is the first of them to be found? 2. Who is it that "longeth" or "lusteth?" is it God, or the Holy Spirit, or our own human spirit? 3. What is it that is longed for by God or the Spirit? Let us take these three questions in order.

1. The words which follow "Think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain?" do not occur in the Old Testament, although the sense of them may be found piecemeal in a variety of passages. Therefore, either the words are not a quotation at all, or they are from some book no longer extant, or they are a condensation of several utterances in the Old Testament.[1] The first of these suppositions seems to be the best, but neither of the others can be set aside as improbable. We may paraphrase, therefore, the first part of the passage thus:—

"Ye unfaithful spouses of Jehovah! know ye not that to be friendly with the world is to be at enmity with Him? Or do ye think that what the Scripture says about faithlessness to God is idly spoken?" But as regards this first question we must be content to remain in great uncertainty.

2. Who is it that "longeth" or "lusteth" (ἐπιποθεῖ)? To decide whether "longeth" or "lusteth" is the right translation will help us to decide this second point, and it will also help us to decide whether the sentence is interrogative or not. Is this word of

[1] Comp. 1 Cor. ii. 9; ix. 10; Eph. v. 14, in all which places we have quotations the source of which cannot be determined. Similar phenomena are frequent in patristic literature. See A. Resch's *Agrapha; Aussercanonische Evangelienfragmente* in *Texte und Untersuchungen z. Gesch. d. Altchr. Lit.* (Leipzig, 1889), p. 256.

desiring used here in the good sense of longing or yearning, or in the bad sense of lusting? The word occurs frequently in the New Testament, and in every one of these passages it is used in a good sense (Rom. i. 11; 2 Cor. v. 2; ix. 14; Phil. i. 8; ii. 26; 1 Thess. iii. 10; 2 Tim. i. 4; 1 Peter ii. 2). Nor is this the whole case. Substantives and adjectives which are closely cognate with it are fairly common, and these are all used in a good sense (Rom. xv. 23; 2 Cor. vii. 7; vii. 11; Phil. iv. 1). We may therefore set aside the interpretations of the sentence which require the rendering "lusteth," whether the statement that man's spirit lusteth enviously, or the question, Doth the Divine Spirit in us lust enviously? The word here expresses the mighty and affectionate longing of the Divine love. And it is the *Spirit* which God made to dwell in us which longeth over us with a jealous longing. If we make the sentence mean that *God* longeth, then we are compelled to take the Spirit which He made to dwell in us as that for which He longs; God has a jealous longing for His own Spirit implanted in us. But this does not yield very good sense; we decide, therefore, for the rendering, "Even unto jealousy doth the Spirit which He made to dwell in us yearn over us." "Even unto jealousy;" these words stand first, with great emphasis. No friendship with the world or any alien object can be tolerated.

3. The third question has been solved by the answer to the second. That which is yearned for by the Spirit implanted in us is ourselves. The meaning is not that God longs for man's spirit (the human spirit would hardly be spoken of as that which God "made to dwell in us"), or that He longs for the Holy Spirit in us (a meaning which would be very hard to explain),

but that His Holy Spirit yearns for us with a jealous yearning. God is a jealous God, and the Divine love is a jealous love; it brooks no rival. And when His Spirit takes up its abode in us it cannot rest until it possesses us wholly, to the exclusion of all alien affections.

At one of the conferences between the Northern and the Southern States of America during the war of 1861—1866 the representatives of the Southern States stated what cession of territory they were prepared to make, provided that the independence of the portion that was not ceded to the Federal Government was secured. More and more attractive offers were made, the portions to be ceded being increased, and those to be retained in a state of independence being proportionately diminished. All the offers were met by a steadfast refusal. At last President Lincoln placed his hand on the map so as to cover all the Southern States, and in these emphatic words delivered his ultimatum: "Gentlemen, this Government *must have the whole.*" The constitution of the United States was at an end if any part, however small, was allowed to become independent of the rest. It was a vital principle, which did not admit of exceptions or degrees. It must be kept in its entirety, or it was not kept at all.

Just such is the claim which God, by the working of His Spirit, makes upon ourselves. He cannot share us with the world, however much we may offer to Him, and however little to His rival. If a rival is admitted at all, our relation to Him is violated and we have become unfaithful. His government *must have the whole.*

Do these terms seem to be harsh? They are not

really so, for the more we surrender, the more He bestows. We give up the world, and that appears to us to be a great sacrifice. "But He giveth more grace." Even in this world He gives far more than we give up, and adds a crown of life in the world to come (i. 12). "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake, and for the Gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark x. 29, 30). "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Those who persist in making friends with the world, in seeking its advantages, in adopting its standards, in accepting its praise, God resists. By choosing to throw in their lot with His enemy they have made themselves His enemies, and He cannot but withstand them. But to those who humbly submit their wills to His, who give up the world, with its gifts and its promises, and are willing to be despised by it in order to keep themselves unspotted from it, He gives grace—grace to cling closer to Him, in spite of the attractions of the world; a gift which, unlike the gifts of the world, never loses its savour.

Was St. James acquainted with the *Magnificat?* May not he, the Lord's brother, have sometimes heard the Mother of the Lord recite it? The passage before us is almost like an echo of some of its words: "His mercy is unto generations and generations of them that fear Him. He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their

heart. He hath put down princes from their thrones, and hath exalted them of low degree. The hungry He hath filled with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away." At any rate the *Magnificat* and St. James teach the same lesson as the Book of Proverbs and St. Peter, who, like St. James, quotes it (1 Peter v. 5), that God resists and puts down those who choose to unite themselves with the world in preference to Him, and gives more and more graces and blessings to all who by faith in Him and His Christ have overcome the world. It is only by faith that we *can* overcome. A conviction that the things which are seen are the most important and pressing, if not the only realities, is sure to betray us into a state of captivity in which the power to work for God, and even the desire to serve Him, will become less and less. We have willed to place ourselves under the world's spell, and such influence as we possess tells not for God, but against Him. But a belief that the chief and noblest realities are unseen enables a man to preserve an attitude of independence and indifference towards things which, even if they are substantial advantages, belong to this world only. He knows how insignificant all that this life has to offer is, compared with the immeasurable joys and woes of the life to come, and he cannot be guilty of the folly of sacrificing a certain and eternal future to a brief and uncertain present. The God in whom he believes is far more to him than the world which he sees and feels. "This is the victory which hath overcome the world, even his faith."

CHAPTER XX.

THE POWER OF SATAN AND ITS LIMITS. HUMILITY THE FOUNDATION OF PENITENCE AND OF HOLINESS.

"Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you."—St. James iv. 7-10.

SUBMISSION to God is the beginning, middle, and end of the prodigal's return from disastrous familiarity with the world to the security of the Father's home. A readiness to submit to whatever He may impose is the first step in the conversion, just as unwillingness to surrender one's own will is the first step towards revolt and desertion. "I am no more worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired servants." As soon as the resolve to make this act of submission is formed, the turning-point between friendship with the world and fidelity to God has been passed. The homeward path is not an easy one, but it is certain, and those who unflinchingly take it are sure of a welcome at the end of it. The prodigal was tenderly received back by his offended father, and these adulterous souls will be admitted to their old privileges again, if they will but return. God has given them

no bill of divorcement to put them away for ever (Isa. l. 1). "If a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord" (Jer. iii. 1). An amount of mercy and forgiveness which cannot be shown by an earthly husband to his unfaithful wife is readily promised by God.

But the return must be a complete one. There must be every guarantee that the penitent is in earnest and has utterly broken with the past. And St. James with affectionate sternness points out the necessary steps towards reconciliation. He will not be guilty of the crime of those who "have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people lightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. viii. 11). The results of intimacy with the world cannot be undone in a day, and there is painful work to be done before the old relationship can be restored between the soul and its God.

Among the most grievous consequences of yielding to the world and its ways are the weakening of the will and the lowering of the moral tone. They come gradually, but surely; and they act and react upon one another. The habitual shirking of the sterner duties of life, and the living in an atmosphere of self-indulgence, enervate the will; and the conscious adoption of a standard of life which is not approved by conscience is in itself a lowering of tone. And this is one of the essential elements of worldliness. The pleas that "I can't help it," and that "everybody does it," are among the most common excuses urged by those whose citizenship is not in heaven (Phil. iii. 20) but in that

commonwealth of which Satan is the presiding power. They like to believe that temptations are irresistible, and that there is no obligation to rise above the standard of morality which those about them profess to accept. Such men deliberately surrender to what they know to be evil, and place what they think to be expedient above what they know to be right, forgetting that even the worldlings who set them this low standard, and openly defend it, very often do not really approve it, but despise while they applaud the man that conforms to it.

St. James enters an earnest and simple protest against the weak plea that temptations are irresistible. To maintain *that* is to assert that the evil one has more will and power to destroy mankind than God has to save them. The truth is exactly the other way. God not only allows to Satan no power to coerce a man into sin, but He Himself is ever ready to aid when He is faithfully prayed to do so. Every Christian is endowed with sufficient power to withstand Satan, if only the will to withstand is present, because he has the power to summon God to his assistance. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you;" that is one side of the blessed truth; and the other is its correlative: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

It will be observed that St. James, quite as much as St. Peter, or St. Paul, or St. John, speaks of the chief power of evil as a *person*. The passage is not intelligible on any other interpretation; for there is a manifest and telling antithesis between the devil who yields to opposition, and the God who responds to invitation. It is a contrast between two personal agencies. Whether St. James was aware of the teaching of the Apostles on this point is not of great moment; his own

teaching is clear enough. As a Jew he had been brought up in the belief that there are evil spiritual beings of whom Satan is the chief, and since he became a Christian he had never been required to revise this belief. He was probably well aware of the teaching of Jesus Christ as to the real source of temptations. He may have heard Christ's own interpretation of the birds in the parable of the Sower: "And when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them" (Mark iv. 15). He probably had heard of Christ's declaration to St. Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke xxii. 31), where we have a contrast similar to this, an infernal person on one side, and a Divine Person on the other, of the man assailed by temptation. How easy to have interpreted the birds in the parable as the impersonal solicitations of a depraved nature, the hearers' own evil tendencies; and perhaps if we had not possessed Christ's own explanation we should so have explained the birds by the wayside. But Christ seems to have made use of this, the queen of all the parables (Mark iv. 13), in order to teach that a personal enemy there is, who is ever on the watch to deprive us of what will save our souls. And the warning to St. Peter might easily have been given in a form that would not have implied a personal tempter. Nor do these two striking passages stand alone in our Lord's teaching. How unnecessary to speak of the woman who "was bowed together, and could in nowise lift up herself," as one "whom Satan had bound," unless He desired to sanction and enforce this belief (Luke xiv. 11, 16). And why speak of having "beheld Satan

fall as lightning from heaven" (Luke x. 18), unless He had this desire? When the Jews said that He cast out devils by the aid of the prince of the devils, it would have been a much more complete contradiction to have replied that no such person existed, than to argue that Satan was not likely to fight against his own interests. If the belief in personal powers of evil is a superstition, Jesus Christ had ample opportunities of correcting it; and He not only steadfastly abstained from doing so, but in very marked ways, both by His acts and by His teaching, He did a great deal to encourage and inculcate the belief. He showed no sympathy with the scepticism of the Sadducees about such things. He argued convincingly against them as regards the doctrine of the resurrection and a future life, and He gave full sanction to the belief in angels and spirits, both good and bad. There is no need to lay much stress upon the disputed meaning of the last petition in the Lord's Prayer; the evidence is quite ample without that. Yet those who are convinced that "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil," must mean, "Lead us not into temptation, *but* deliver us from *the tempter*," have a very important piece of evidence to add to all the rest. Is a gross superstition embodied in the very wording of the model prayer?

In the volume in this series which treats of the Pastoral Epistles is a passage on this subject respecting which a very friendly critic has said that he cannot quite see the force of it.[1] As the argument is of value, it may be worth while to state it here more clearly. The statement criticized is the concluding sentence of

[1] *Sunday School Chronicle*, March 15th, 1889; also the *Durham Chronicle*, Jan. 31st, 1890.

the following passage: "It has been said that if there were no God we should have to invent one; and with almost equal truth we might say that if there were no devil we should have to invent one. Without a belief in God bad men would have little to induce them to conquer their evil passions; *without a belief in a devil good men would have little hope of ever being able to do so.*"[1] The meaning of the last statement is this, that if good men were compelled to believe that all the devilish suggestions which rise up in their minds come *from themselves alone*, they might well be in despair of ever getting the better of themselves or of curing a nature capable of producing such offspring. But when they know that "a power, *not* themselves, which makes for" wickedness is the source of these diabolical temptations, then they can have confidence that their own nature is not so hopelessly corrupt but that, with the help of "the Power, not themslves, that makes for *righteousness*" they will be able to gain the victory.

The plea that the devil is irresistible, and that therefore to yield to temptation is inevitable, is only another form of the fallacy, against which St. James has already protested, of trying to shift the responsibility of temptation from oneself to God (i. 13-15). It is the old fallacy carried a stage farther. The former plea has reference to the temptation; the present one has reference to the fall. As regards both the facts are conclusive. We often provoke our own temptations; we always can resist them if we in faith draw nigh to God for protection. "To this end the Son of man was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8). And the Son of God pre-

[1] *Expositor's Bible: Pastoral Epistles* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1888), p. 80.

serveth every child of God, "and the evil one toucheth him not" (1 John v. 18). But the man himself must consent and co-operate, for God saves no man against his will. "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you," is the principle of the Old Covenant (Zech. i. 3); and "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you," is the principle of the New.

The converse of this is true also, and it is a fact of equal solemnity and of great awfulness. Resist *God*, and He will depart from you. Draw nigh to the *devil*, and he will draw nigh to you. If we persist in withstanding God's grace, He will at last leave us to ourselves. His Spirit will not always strive with us; but at last He Himself hardens the heart which we have closed against him, for He allows things to take their course, and the heart which refuses to be softened by the dew of His grace must become harder and harder. And the more we place ourselves in the devil's way, by exposing ourselves to needless temptations, the more diligently he will seek us and abide with us. Those who voluntarily take up their abode in the tents of ungodliness have surrendered all claim to be kept unspotted from the world. They have lost their right to join in the cry, "Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble?"

But the hands which one raises in prayer to God must be cleansed by withholding them from all evil practices, and from all grasping after the contaminating gifts of the world; and the heart must be purified by the quenching of unholy desires and the cultivation of a godly spirit. In this St. James is but repeating the principles laid down by the Psalmist: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath *clean hands*

and a *pure heart*" (Ps. xxiv. 3, 4). And in similar language we find Clement of Rome exhorting the Corinthians, "Let us therefore approach Him in *holiness of soul*, lifting up *pure and undefiled hands* unto Him" (xxix.). In all these instances the external instruments of human conduct are mentioned along with the internal source of it.

St. James is not addressing two classes of people when he says, "Cleanse your hands, ye *sinners;* and purify your hearts, ye *double-minded.*" Every one whose hands have wrought unrighteousness is a sinner who needs this cleansing; and every one who attempts to draw nigh to God, without at the same time surrendering all unholy desires, is a double-minded man who needs this purification. The "halting between two opinions," between God and Mammon, and between Christ and the world, is fatal to true conversion and efficacious prayer. What is necessary, therefore, for these sinners of double mind, is outward amendment of life and inward purification of the desires. "The sinner that goeth two ways" must with "a single eye" direct his path along the narrow way. "Whoso walketh uprightly shall be delivered; but he that walketh perversely in two ways shall fall at once" (Prov. xxviii. 18). The whole exhortation is in spirit very similar to the second half of the second chapter of Ecclesiasticus. Note especially the concluding verses: "They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts and humble their souls in His sight, saying, We will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men; for as His majesty is, so is His mercy."

There must be no "light healing," or treatment of the grievous sins of the past as of no moment. There must be genuine sorrow for the unfaithfulness which

has separated them so long from their God, and for the pride which has betrayed them into rebellion against Him. "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep." The first verb refers to the inward feeling of wretchedness, the other two to the outward expression of it. These two are found in combination in several passages, both in the Old Testament and in the New (2 Sam. xix. 2; Neh. viii. 9; Mark xvi. 10; Luke vi. 25; Rev. xviii. 15, 19). The feelings of satisfaction and self-sufficiency in which these friends of the world have hitherto indulged, and the glowing complacency which has been manifest in their demeanour, have been quite out of place, and must be exchanged for feelings and manifestations of grief. Their worldly merriment also must be abandoned; those who have cut themselves off from God have no true spring of joy. "Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." The last word (*κατήφεια*), which occurs nowhere else in Scripture, refers primarily to the dejected look which accompanies heaviness of heart. The writer of the Book of Wisdom uses the adjective (*κατηφής*) to express the "*gloomy* phantoms with unsmiling faces" which he supposes to have appeared to the Egyptians during the plague of darkness (xvii. 4). The term admirably expresses the opposite of boisterous lightheartedness.

St. James ends as he began, with submission to the Almighty. He began his exhortation as to the right method of conversion with "Be subject unto God." He ends with "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you." The root of their worldliness and their grasping at wealth and honour is pride and self-will, and the cure for that is self-abasement and self-surrender. If it is God's will that they should

occupy a lowly place in society, let them humbly accept their lot, and not try to change it by violence or fraud. If they will but remember their own transgressions against the Lord, they will admit that the humblest place is not too humble for their merits; and it is the humble whom God delights to honour. Here, again, St. James is reproducing the teaching of his Divine Brother: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xiv. 11; Matt. xxiii. 12). And the Old Testament teaches the same lesson. "The humble person He shall save," says Eliphaz the Temanite (Job xxii. 29); and the Psalmist gives us both sides of the Divine law of compensation: "Thou wilt save the afflicted people; but the haughty eyes Thou wilt bring down" (xviii. 27).

"Humble *yourselves;*" "He that humbleth *himself.*" Everything depends on that. It must be *self*-abasement. There is nothing meritorious in chancing to be in a humble position, still less in being *forced* to descend to one. It is the voluntary acceptance, or the choice, of a lowly place that is pleasing to God. We must choose it as knowing that we deserve nothing better, and as wishing that others should be promoted rather than ourselves. And this must be done "*in the sight of the Lord;*" not in self-consciousness, to "to be seen of men," which is "the pride that apes humility," but in the consciousness of the ineffable presence of God. That is the source of all true self-abasement and humility. To realize that we are in the presence of the All-holy and All-pure, in whose sight the stars are not clean, and who charges even the angels with folly, is to feel that all differences of merit between man and man have faded away in the immeasurable abyss which

separates our own insignificance and pollution from the majesty of His holiness. "Now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," is the language of Job (xlii. 5, 6). And it was the same feeling which wrung from St. Peter, as he fell down at Jesus' knees, the agonizing cry, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v. 8). Hence it is that the most saintly persons are always the most humble; for they realize most perfectly the holiness of God and the ceaselessness of His presence, and are therefore best able to appreciate the contrast between their own miserable imperfections and His unapproachable purity. The language which they at times use about themselves is sometimes suspected of unreality and exaggeration, if not of downright hypocrisy; but it is the natural expression of the feelings of one who knows a great deal about the difference between a creature who is habitually falling into sin and One who, in holiness, as in wisdom and power, is absolute and infinite perfection. Humility is thus the beginning and end of all true religion. The sinner who turns to God must be humble; and this is the humility which St. James is urging. And the saint, as he approaches nearer to God, will be humble; for he knows what the approach has cost him, and how very far off he still remains.

"And He will exalt you." This is the result, not the motive. To strive to be humble *in order* to be exalted would be to poison the virtue at its source. Just as the conscious pursuit of happiness is fatal to its attainment, so also the conscious aim at Divine promotion. The way to be happy is not to think about one's own happiness, but to sacrifice it to that of others; and the way to be exalted by God is not to think of one's

own advancement, but to devote oneself to the advancement of others. The exaltation is sure to come, if only humility is attained; an exaltation of which there is a foretaste even in this life, but the full fruition of which lies in those unknown glories which await the humble Christian in the world to come.

NOTE.—It may be that in the phrase "Resist the devil" we have an echo of another unrecorded utterance of Christ, of which we have possible traces also in St. Paul's "Stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. vi. 11), and St. Peter's "Whom withstand, steadfast in your faith" (1 Peter v. 9). Comp. Shepherd of Hermas, *Mand.* XII. v. 2; iv. 7; Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, *Neph.* viii., where James iv. 7 (or its source) would seem to be quoted.

CHAPTER XXI.

SELF-ASSURANCE AND INVASION OF DIVINE PREROGATIVES INVOLVED IN THE LOVE OF CENSURING OTHERS.

"Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. One only is the Lawgiver and Judge, even He who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?"—St. James iv. 11, 12.

FROM sins which are the result of a want of love to God St. James passes on, and abruptly, to some which are the result of a want of love for one's neighbour. But in thus passing on he is really returning to his main subject, for the central portion of the Epistle is chiefly taken up with one's duty towards one's neighbour. And of this duty he again singles out for special notice the necessity for putting a bridle on one's tongue (i. 26; iii. 1-12). Some have supposed that he is addressing a new class of readers; but the much gentler address, "brethren," as compared with "ye adulteresses" (ver. 4), "ye sinners," "ye double-minded" (ver. 8), does not at all compel us to suppose that. After a paragraph of exceptional sternness, he returns to his usual manner of addressing his readers (i. 2, 16, 19; ii. 1, 5, 14; iii. 1, 10, 12; v. 7, 9, 10, 12, 19), and

with all the more fitness because the address "brethren" is in itself an indirect reproof for unbrotherly conduct. It implies what Moses expressed when he said, "Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?" (Acts vii. 26).

"Speak not against one another, brethren." The context shows what kind of adverse speaking is meant. It is not so much abusive or calumnious language that is condemned, as the *love of finding fault.* The censorious temper is utterly unchristian. It means that we have been paying an amount of attention to the conduct of others which would have been better bestowed upon our own. It means also that we have been paying this attention, not in order to help, but in order to criticize, and criticize unfavourably. It shows, moreover, that we have a very inadequate estimate of our own frailty and shortcomings. If we knew how worthy of blame we ourselves are, we should be much less ready to deal out blame to others. But over and above all this, censoriousness is an invasion of the Divine prerogatives. It is not merely a transgression of the royal law of love, but a setting oneself above the law, as if it were a mistake, or did not apply to oneself. It is a climbing up on to that judgment-seat on which God alone has the right to sit, and a publishing of judgments upon others which He alone has the right to pronounce. This is the aspect of it on which St. James lays most stress.

"He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth a brother, speaketh against the law and judgeth the law." St. James is probably not referring to Christ's command in the Sermon on the Mount, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (Matt. vii. 1, 2). It is a law of far

wider scope that is in his mind, the same as that of which he has already spoken, "the perfect law, the law of liberty" (i. 25); "the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (ii. 8). No one who knows this law, and has at all grasped its meaning and scope, can suppose that observance of it is compatible with habitual criticism of the conduct of others, and frequent utterance of unfavourable judgments respecting them. No man, however *willing* he may be to have his conduct laid open to criticism, is *fond* of being constantly subjected to it. Still less can any one be fond of being made the object of slighting and condemnatory remarks. Every man's personal experience has taught him that; and if he loves his neighbour as himself, he will take care to inflict on him as little pain of this kind as possible. If, with full knowledge of the royal law of charity, and with full experience of the vexation which adverse criticism causes, he still persists in framing and expressing unfriendly opinions respecting other people, then he is setting himself up as superior, not only to those whom he presumes to judge, but to the law itself. He is, by his conduct, condemning the law of love as a bad law, or at least as so defective that a superior person like himself may without scruple disregard it. In judging and condemning his brother he is judging and condemning the law; and he who condemns a law assumes that he is in possession of some higher principle by which he tests it and finds it wanting. What is the higher principle by which the censorious person justifies his contempt for the law of love? He has nothing to show us but his own arrogance and self-confidence. *He* knows what the duty of other persons is, and how signally they fall short of it. To talk of

"hoping all things, and enduring all things," and of "taking not account of evil," may be all very well theoretically of an ideal state of society; but in the very far from ideal world in which we have to live it is necessary to keep one's eye open to the conduct of other people, and to keep them up to the mark by letting them and their acquaintances know what we think of them. It is no use mincing matters or being mealy-mouthed; wherever abuses are found, or even suspected, they must be denounced. And if other persons neglect their duty in this particular, the censorious man is not going to share such responsibility. This is the kind of reasoning by which flagrant violations of the law of love are frequently justified. And such reasoning, as St. James plainly shows, amounts really to this, that those who employ it know better than the Divine Lawgiver the principles by which human society ought to be governed. He has clearly promulgated a law; and they ascend His judgment-seat, and intimate that very serious exceptions and modifications are necessary; indeed, that in some cases the law must be entirely superseded. *They*, at any rate, are not bound by it.

This proneness to judge and condemn others is further proof of that want of humility about which so much was said in the previous section. Pride, the most subtle of sins, has very many forms, and one of them is the love of finding fault; that is, the love of assuming an attitude of superiority, not only towards other persons, but towards the law of charity and Him who is the Author of it. To a truly humble man this is impossible. He is accustomed to contrast the outcome of his own life with the requirements of God's law, and to know how awful is the gulf which separates

the one from the other. He knows too much against himself to take delight in censuring the faults of others. Censoriousness is a sure sign that he who is addicted to it is ignorant of the immensity of his own shortcomings. No man who habitually considers his own transgressions will be eager to be severe upon the transgressions of others, or to usurp functions which require full authority and perfect knowledge for their equitable and adequate performance.

Censoriousness brings yet another evil in its train. Indulgence in the habit of prying into the acts and motives of others leaves us little time and less liking for searching carefully into our own acts and motives. The two things act and react upon one another by a natural law. The more seriously and frequently we examine ourselves, the less prone we shall be to criticize others; and the more pertinaciously we busy ourselves about the supposed shortcomings and delinquencies of our neighbours, the less we are likely to investigate and realize our own grievous sins. All the more will this be the case if we are in the habit of *giving utterance* to the uncharitable judgments which we love to frame. He who constantly expresses his detestation of evil by denouncing the evil doings of his brethren is not the man most likely to express his detestation of it by the holiness of his own life; and the man whose whole life is a protest against sin is not the man most given to protesting against sinners. To be constantly speculating, to be frequently deciding, to be ready to make known our decisions, as to whether this man is "awakened" or not, whether he is "converted" or not, whether he is a "Catholic" or not, whether he is a "sound Churchman" or not—what is this but to climb up into the White Throne, and with

human ignorance and prejudice anticipate the judgments of Divine Omniscience and Justice, as to who are on the right hand, and who on the left?

"One only is Lawgiver and Judge, even He who is able to save and to destroy." There is one and only one Source of all law and authority, and that Source is God Himself. Jesus Christ affirmed the same doctrine when He consented to plead, as a prisoner charged with many crimes, before the judgment-seat of His own creature, Pontius Pilate. "Thou wouldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above" (John xix. 11). It was Christ's last word to the Roman Procurator, a declaration of the supremacy of God in the government of the world, and a protest against the claim insinuated in "I have power to release Thee, and I have power to crucify Thee," to be possessed of an authority that was irresponsible. Jesus declared that Pilate's power over Himself was the result of a Divine commission; for the possession and exercise of all authority is the gift of God, and can have no other origin. And this sole Fount of authority, this one only Lawgiver and Judge, has no need of assessors. While He delegates some portions of His power to human representatives, He requires no man, He allows no man, to share his judgment-seat, or to cancel or modify His laws. It is one of those cases in which the possession of power is proof of the possession of right. "He who is *able* to save and to destroy," who has the power to execute sentences respecting the weal and woe of immortal souls, has the right to pronounce such sentences. Man has no right to frame and utter such judgments, because he has no power to put them into execution; and the practice of uttering them is a perpetual usurpation of Divine prerogatives.

It is an approach to that sin which brought about the fall of the angels.

Is not the sin of a censorious temper in a very real sense diabolical? It is Satan's special delight to be "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. xii. 10). His names, Satan ("adversary") and devil (διάβολος = "malicious accuser"), bear witness to this characteristic, which is brought prominently forward in the opening chapters of the Book of Job.[1] It is of the essence of censoriousness that its activity is displayed with a sinister motive. The charges are commonly uttered, not to the person who is blamed, but to others, who will thereby be prejudiced against him; or if they are made to the man's own face, it is with the object of inflicting pain, rather than with the hope of thereby inducing him to amend. It is no "speaking truth in love" (Eph. iv. 15), but reckless or malevolent speaking evil, without much caring whether it be true or false. It is a poisoning of the wells out of which respect and affection for our fellow-men flow. Thus the presumption which grasps at functions that belong to God alone leads to a fall and a course of action which is indeed Satanical.

"One only is the Lawgiver and the Judge, even He who is able to save and to destroy." St. Peter and St. Paul teach the same doctrine in those Epistles which (as has been already pointed out) it is *possible* that the writer of this Epistle may have seen. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake:

[1] Dr. Hatch thinks that in both the Septuagint and the New Testament διάβολος, when used as a proper name, has "the general connotation of enmity, and without implying accusation, whether true or false." As an adjective it has its usual meaning of "slanderous" (1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 3; Titus ii. 3) (*Biblical Greek*, pp. 46, 47).

whether it be to the king, as supreme (*i.e.* to the Roman Emperor); or unto governors, as sent by him" (1 Peter ii. 13). However much of human origination (κτίσις ἀνθρωπίνη) there may be about civil government, yet its sanctions are Divine. And St. Paul affirms that its real origin is Divine also: "There is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1). The ultimate sanction of even Pilate's misused jurisdiction was "from above;" and it was to inhabitants of Rome, appalled by the frantic atrocities of Nero, that St. Paul declared that the authority of their Emperor existed by "the ordinance of God." If to resist this delegated authority be a serious matter, how much more to attempt to anticipate or to contradict the judgments of Him from whom it springs!

"But who art thou, that judgest thy neighbour?" St. James concludes this brief section against the sin of censoriousness by a telling *argumentum ad hominem.* Granted that there are grave evils in some of the brethren among whom and with whom you live; granted that it is quite necessary that these evils should be noticed and condemned; are you precisely the persons that are best qualified to do it? Putting aside the question of authority, what are your personal qualifications for the office of a censor and a judge? Is there that blamelessness of life, that gravity of behaviour, that purity of motive, that severe control of tongue, that freedom from contamination from the world, that overflowing charity which marks the man of pure religion? To such a man finding fault with his brethren is real pain; and therefore to be *fond* of finding fault is strong evidence that these necessary qualities are not possessed. Least of all is such a one fond of disclosing to others the sins which he has

discovered in an erring brother. Indeed, there is scarcely a better way of detecting our own "secret faults" than that of noticing what blemishes we are most prone to suspect and denounce in the lives of our neighbours. It is often our own personal acquaintance with iniquity that makes us suppose that others must be like ourselves. It is our own meanness, dishonesty, pride, or impurity that we see reflected on what is perhaps only the surface of a life whose secret springs and motives lie in a sphere quite beyond our grovelling comprehension. Here, again, St. James is quite in harmony with St. Paul, who asks the same question: "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. . . . But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God?" (Rom. xiv. 4, 10).

But are not St. James and St. Paul requiring of us what is impossible? Is it not beyond our power to avoid forming judgments about our brethren? Certainly this is beyond our power, and we are not required to do anything so unreasonable as to attempt to avoid such inevitable judgments. Whenever the conduct of others comes under our notice we necessarily form some kind of an opinion of it, and it is out of these opinions and judgments, of which we form many in the course of a day, that our own characters are to a large extent slowly built up; for the way in which we regard the conduct of others has a great influence upon our own conduct. But it is not this necessary judging that is condemned. What is condemned is the inquisitorial examination of our neighbours' views and

actions, undertaken without authority and without love. Such judging is sinister in its purpose, and is disappointed if it can find nothing to blame. It is eager, rather than unwilling, to think evil, its prejudices being against, rather than in favour of, those whom it criticizes. To discover some grievous form of wrong-doing is not a sorrow, but a delight.

But what both St. James and St. Paul condemn, even more than the habit of forming these unfavourable judgments about our neighbours, is the giving effect to them. "*Speak* not one against another." "Why dost thou *set at nought* thy brother?" This at any rate we all can avoid. However difficult, or impossible, it may be to avoid forming unfavourable opinions of other people, we can at any rate abstain from publishing such opinions to the world. The temper which delights in communicating suspicions and criticisms is even more fatal than the habit of forming and cherishing them; it is the difference between a disease which is infectious, and one which is not. The bitterness and misery which are caused by the love of evil speaking is incalculable. It is one enormous item in that tragic sum of human suffering which is entirely preventable. Much of human suffering is inevitable and incurable; it may be compensated or consoled, but it can be neither escaped nor remedied. There is much, however, that need never be incurred at all, that is utterly wanton and gratuitous. And this pathetic burden of utterly needless misery in great measure consists of that which we heedlessly or maliciously inflict upon one another by making known, with quite inadequate reason, our knowledge or suspicion of the misconduct of other people. Experience seems to do little towards curing us of this fault. Over and over again we have

discovered, after having communicated suspicions, that they are baseless. Over and over again we have found out that to disclose what we know to the discredit of a neighbour does more harm than good. And not infrequently we have ourselves had abundant reason to wish that we had never spoken; for curses are not the only kind of evil speaking that is wont to "come home to roost." And yet, each time that the temptation occurs again, we persuade ourselves that it is our duty to speak out, to put others on their guard, to denounce an unquestionable abuse, and so forth. And forthwith we set the whisper in motion, or we write a letter to the papers, and the supposed delinquent is "shown up." An honest answer to the questions, "Should I say this of him if he were present? Why do I not speak to him about it, instead of to others? Am I sorry or glad to make this known?" would at once make us pause, and perhaps abstain. They would lead us to see that we are not undertaking a painful duty, but needlessly indulging an unchristian censoriousness, and thereby inflicting needless pain. It is not given to many of us to do a great deal towards making other persons holier; but it is within the power of all of us to do a very great deal towards making others happier; and one of the simplest methods of diminishing the miseries and increasing the joys of society is to maintain a firm control over our tempers and our tongues, and to observe to the utmost St. James's pregnant rule, "Speak not one against another, brethren."

CHAPTER XXII.

SELF-ASSURANCE AND INVASION OF DIVINE PREROGATIVES INVOLVED IN PRESUMING UPON OUR FUTURE. THE DOCTRINE OF PROBABILISM.

"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil. To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."—St. James iv. 13-17.

WORLDLINESS and want of humility are the two kindred subjects which form the groundwork of this portion of the Epistle. This fourth chapter falls into three main divisions, of which the third and last is before us; and these two subjects underlie all three. In the first the arrogant grasping after the pleasures, honours, and riches of the world, in preference to the love of God, is condemned. In the second the arrogant judging of others in defiance of the Divine law of charity is forbidden. In the third arrogant trust in the security of human undertakings, without consideration of God's will, is denounced. The transition from the false confidence which leads men to judge others with a light heart, to the false confidence which leads men to account the future as their own, is easily made; and thus once more, while

we seem to be abruptly passing to a fresh topic, we are really moving quite naturally from one branch of the main subject to another. The assurance which finds plenty of time for censuring others, but little or none for censuring self, is closely akin to the assurance which counts on having plenty of time for all its schemes, without thought of death or of the Divine decrees. This, then, is the subject before us—presumptuous security as to future undertakings. The future is God's, not ours, just as to judge mankind belongs to Him, and not to us. Therefore to think and speak of the future as if we had the power to control it is as presumptuous as to think and speak of our fellow-men as if we had the power to judge them. In both cases we assume a knowledge and an authority which we do not possess.

"Go to now" (ἄγε νῦν) is a vigorous form of address, which occurs nowhere in the New Testament, excepting here and at the beginning of the next section. Although originally an imperative singular, it has become so completely an adverb that it can be used, as here, when a number of persons are addressed. It serves to attract attention. Those who think that they can acquit themselves of the charge of censoriousness have yet another form of presumptuous confidence to consider. The parable of the Rich Fool, who said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke xii. 19), should be compared with this exhortation. And it is remarkable that it was just after our Lord had refused to be made a judge over two contending brothers that He spoke the parable of the Rich Fool.

There is no special emphasis on "ye that *say*," as if

the meaning were, "ye who not only have these presumptuous thoughts, but dare to utter them." In the previous section giving utterance to unfavourable judgments about one's neighbours is evidently worse than merely thinking them, and is a great aggravation of the sin; but here thinking and saying are much the same. The presumptuous people look far ahead, think every step in the plan quite secure, and speak accordingly. To-day and to-morrow are quite safe. The journey to the proposed city is quite safe. That they will spend a year there is regarded as certain, and that they will be able to spend it as they please, viz. in trading. Lastly, they have no doubts as to the success of the whole enterprise; they will "get gain." All this is thought of and spoken of as being entirely within their own control. They have only to decide on doing it, and the whole will be done. That there is a Providence which needs to be considered is entirely left out of sight. That not even their own lives can be counted on for a single day is a fact that is equally ignored.

It was long ago remarked that "All men are mortal" is a proposition which each man believes to be true of every one excepting himself. Not that any one seriously believes that he himself will be exempt from death; but each one of us habitually thinks and acts as if in his case death were such an indefinite distance off that practically there is no need to take account of it—at any rate at present. The young and the strong rarely think of death as a subject that calls for serious attention. Those who are past the prime of life still think that they have many years of life in store. And even those who have received the solemn warning which is involved in reaching man's allotted threescore and ten

years remember with satisfaction that many persons have reached fourscore and ten or more, and that therefore there is good reason for believing that they themselves have a considerable portion of life still in front of them. Perhaps the man of ninety finds himself sometimes thinking, if not talking to others, of what he means to do, not only to-morrow, but next year.

Such habits of thought and language are very common, and a man has to be carefully on the watch against himself, in order to avoid them. They are entirely opposed to the spirit of both the Old and the New Testament, and in the most literal sense of the term may be stigmatized as *godless*. The security which ignores the will of God in its calculations, and thinks and acts as an independent power, is godless. Dependence upon God is the centre both of Judaism and of Christianity. A story of the Rabbinists brings this out as clearly on the Jewish side as the parable of the Rich Fool does on the Christian. At his son's circumcision a Jewish father set wine that was seven years old before his guests, with the remark that with this wine he would continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of his son. The same night the Angel of Death meets the Rabbi Simeon, who accosts him and asks him, "Why art thou thus wandering about?" "Because," said the angel, "I slay those who say, We will do this or that, and think not how soon death may come upon them. The man who said that he would continue for a long time to drink that wine shall die in thirty days." It is in this way that "the *careless ease* of fools shall destroy them" (Prov. i. 32). And hence the warning, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1). The man who makes plans for the future without taking

account of Providence is not far removed from "the fool, who says in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. xiv. 1; liii. 1). "Set not thy heart upon thy goods; and say not, I have enough for my life. Follow not thine own mind and thy strength, to walk in the ways of thy heart; and say not, Who shall control me? for the Lord will surely avenge thy pride" (Ecclus. v. 1-3). "There is that waxeth rich by his wariness and pinching, and this is the portion of his reward. Whereas he saith, I have found rest, and now will eat continually of my good; and yet he knoweth not what time shall come upon him, and that he must leave those things to others, and die" (Ecclus. xi. 18, 19).

The Cyrenaics and their more refined followers the Epicureans started from the same premises, viz. the utter uncertainty of the future, and the inability of man to control it, but drew from them a very different conclusion. Dependence upon God was one of the last doctrines likely to be inculcated by those who contended that there is no such thing as Providence, for the gods do not concern themselves with the affairs of men. True wisdom, they said, will consist in the skilful, calm, and deliberate appropriation of such pleasure as our circumstances afford moment by moment, unruffled by passion, prejudice, or superstition. The present alone is ours, and we must resolutely make the most of it, without remorse for a past which we can never alter, and without disquietude about a future which we cannot determine, and may never possess. This is not very profound as philosophy, for in the wear and tear of life it can neither fortify nor console; and as a substitute for religion it is still less satisfying. The whole difference which separates Paganism from Christianity lies between two such stanzas as these;—

"Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere; et
Quem Fors dierum cunque dabit, lucro
Appone, nec dulces amores
Sperne puer neque tu choreas;"

and—

"Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on:
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."[1]

"We will go into this city, *and* spend a year there, *and* trade, *and* get gain." The frequent conjunctions separate the different items of the plan, which are rehearsed thus one by one with manifest satisfaction. The speakers gloat over the different steps of the programme which they have arranged for themselves. St. James selects trading and getting gain as the end of the supposed scheme, partly in orde to show that the aims of these presumptuous schemers are utterly worldly, and partly because a restless activity in commercial enterprise was a common feature among the Jews of the Dispersion. Such pursuits are not condemned; but they are liable to become too absorbing, especially when not pursued in a God-fearing way; and it is this which St. James denounces.

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." It is not easy to determine the original Greek text with certainty, but about the general sense there is no doubt. It is possible, however, that we ought to read, "Whereas ye know not as to the morrow of what kind

[1] Horace, *Odes* I. ix. 13. J. H. Newman, *Verses on Various Occasions*, "The Pillar of the Cloud," June 16th, 1833.

your life will be: for ye are a vapour," etc. In any case "Whereas ye know not" represents words which literally mean, "Since ye are people *of such nature* as not to know" (*οἵτινες οὐκ ἐπίστασθε*). As human beings, whose life is so full of changes and surprises, it is impossible for them to know what vicissitudes the next day will bring. The real uncertainty of life is in marked contrast to their unreal security.

"What is your life?" Of what kind is it? What is its nature (*ποία*)? Bede remarks that St. James does not ask, "What is *our* life?" He says, "What is *your* life?" It is the value of the life of the godless that is in question, not that of the godly. Those who, by their forgetfulness of the Unseen, their desire for material advantages, and their friendliness with the world, have made themselves enemies of God—what is their life worth? Such persons "are a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." But it may be doubted whether St. James is here speaking of the emptiness of an *ungodly* life. He is addressing godless persons, and in rebuking them reminds them how unstable and fleeting life is, not merely to them, but to all men. It is the same thought as we find in Job's complaint, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more" (vii. 9); and we shall see that in the next two sections (v. 1-6, 7-11) there are coincidences with the Book of Job (see pp. 281, 291) But it is perhaps the Book of Wisdom that is specially in the writer's mind: "Our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist, that is driven away with the beams of the sun, and overcome with the heat thereof" (ii. 4). "For the hope of the ungodly is like dust that is blown away

with the wind; like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm; like as the smoke which is dispersed here and there with a tempest, and passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day" (v. 14). And if these passages *are* the source of St. James's metaphor, Bede's interpretation becomes more probable; for in both of them it is the life of the ungodly that is likened to everything that is unsubstantial and transitory.[1]

"For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that." We must beware of understanding these words in such a way as to lose the spirit of them. It is one of many passages of Scripture which are often taken according to the letter, when the letter is of little or no importance. As in so much of the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, we have a *principle* given in the form of a *rule*. Rules are given that they may be observed literally. Principles are given that they may be applied intelligently and observed according to their spirit. We do not obey Christ when we allow the thief who has taken our upper garment to have our under one also; nor do we obey St. James when we say, "If the Lord will," or "Please God," of every future event, and make a plentiful use of "D.V." in all our correspondence. Nor is it enough to say that everything depends upon the *spirit* in which the second garment is surrendered, and in which the "Please God" is uttered, or the "D.V." written. It is quite possible to keep Christ's precept

[1] In commenting on Wisdom ii. 4, Farrar quotes Gregory Nazianzen: "We are a flitting dream, a phantom that cannot be grasped, the scud of a passing breeze, a ship that leaves no trace on the sea, dust, vapour, morning dew, a flower that now blossoms, and now is done away" (*Speaker's Commentary, Apocrypha*, I., p. 431).

without ever surrendering the second garment at all; and indeed we ought not to surrender it. And it is quite possible to keep His brother's precept without ever writing "D.V." or saying "Please God," the habitual use of which would be almost certain to generate formalism and cant in ourselves, and would be quite certain to provoke needless criticism and irreverent ridicule. St. James means that we should habitually feel that moment by moment we are absolutely dependent upon God, not only for the way in which our lives are henceforth to be spent, but for their being prolonged at all. At any instant we may be called upon to surrender, not only all the materials of enjoyment which He has bestowed upon us, but life itself, which is equally His gift; and whenever He does so call upon us we shall have neither the right nor the power to resist. "Shall He not do what He will with His own?" "The Lord gave; and the Lord may take away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

The man who is thoroughly impressed with the fact of his utter dependence upon God for life and all things is sure to express this in his bearing, his tone, and his manner of speaking about the future, even although such phrases as "Please God" and "If the Lord will" never come from his lips or his pen. Indeed, the more complete his realization of this truth is, the less likely will he be to be constantly expressing it in a formula. It is the habitual setting of his thoughts, and does not need to be stated any more than the conditions of time and space. On rare occasions it may be well to remind others of this truth by giving expression to it in words; but in most cases it will be wisest to retain it as an unforgotten but unexpressed premise in the mind. But it is for each one of us to take care that it is *not*

forgotten. Only those who have it constantly in their hearts can safely absolve themselves from the obligation of obeying the words of St. James literally.

"But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil." The carnal self-confidence with which people serenely talk about what they mean to do next year, or many years hence, is only part of a general spirit of arrogance and worldliness which pervades their whole life and conduct; it is one of the results of the thoroughly vitiated moral atmosphere which they have chosen for themselves, and to the noxiousness of which they are constantly contributing. The word here rendered "vaunting," and in 1 John ii. 16 "vainglory," (ἀλαζονεία), indicates insolent and empty assurance; and here the assurance lies in presumptuous trust in the stability of oneself and one's surroundings. Pretentious ostentation is the radical signification of the word, and in Classical Greek it is the pretentiousness which is most prominent, in Hellenistic Greek the ostentation. There is manifest ostentation in speaking confidently about one's future; and seeing how transitory everything human is, the ostentation is empty and pretentious. To be guilty of such vaunting is serious enough; but these fellow-countrymen of St. James, with their minds absorbed in material interests, gloried in their godless view of life. The simple character of his comment makes its severity all the more impressive: "all such glorying is evil." He uses the very word which is commonly used to express "the evil one" (ὁ πονηρός), and thereby indicates the character and source of such glorying.

In concluding this section of his letter, St. James brings the conduct which he has been condemning within the sweep of a very comprehensive principle:

"To him, therefore, that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." No Jew, whether Christian or not, could plead ignorance as an excuse for his transgressions in this matter. Every human being has experienced the uncertainty of the future and the transitoriness of human life; and every Jew was well instructed in the truth that man and all his surroundings are absolutely dependent upon the Divine will. Moreover, those whom St. James is addressing prided themselves on their spiritual knowledge (i. 19); they were professed hearers of God's Word (i. 22, 23), and were anxious to become teachers of others (iii. 1). Theirs is the case of servants who knew their master's will, and neglected to do it (Luke xii. 47). They themselves declared, "We see;" and the rejoinder is, "Your sin remaineth" (John ix. 41). They knew, long before St. James instructed them on the subject, what was seemly for human beings living as creatures in dependence upon their Creator; and they neglected to do what is seemly. To them this neglect is sin.

The passage is very commonly understood as applying to all sins of omission; and no doubt it is very capable of such application, but it does not follow that St. James was thinking of more than the particular case before him. The words may be interpreted in three different degrees of comprehensiveness, and St. James may have meant one, or two, or all three of them.

1. The relation in which a creature ought to stand to the Creator is one of humility and entire dependence; and he who knows that he is a creature, and adopts an attitude of self-confidence and independence, sins.

2. In all cases of transgression knowledge of what is right aggravates the sin, which is then a sin against

light. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin" (John xv. 22).

3. This applies not only to transgressions, but to omissions. Knowledge of what is evil creates an obligation to avoid it, and knowledge of what is good constitutes an obligation to perform it. The latter truth is not so readily admitted as the former. Everyone recognizes that an opportunity of doing *evil* is not a thing about which any choice is allowable. We are not permitted to use the opportunity or not, just as we please; we must on no account make use of it. But not a few persons imagine that an opportunity of doing *good* is a thing about which they have full right of choice; that they may avail themselves of the opportunity or not, just as they please; whereas there is no more freedom in the one case than in the other. We are bound to make use of the opportunity of doing good. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Some of those who think that St. James knew the Epistle to the Romans see here an allusion to the principle which St. Paul there lies down: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (xiv. 23). For reasons already stated (p. 57), it must remain doubtful whether St. James had knowledge of that Epistle; and even if he had, we could not by any means be sure that he had it in his mind when he wrote the words before us. But his words and St. Paul's, when combined, give us a complete statement of a great moral principle respecting the possession or non-possession of knowledge as to what is right and wrong in any given case. So long as we have *no* knowledge that a given act is right, *i.e.* so long as we are in doubt as to whether it is allowable

or not, it is sin to do it. As soon as we *have* knowledge that a given act is right it is sin to leave it undone.

This principle cuts at the root of that unwholesome growth which in moral theology is known as the doctrine of *Probabilism*, and which has worked untold mischief, especially in the Roman Church, in which its chief supporters are to be found. This doctrine teaches that in all cases in which there is doubt as to whether a given act is allowable or not the less safe course may be followed, even when the balance of probability is against its being allowable, if only there are grounds for believing that it *is* allowable. And some supporters of this doctrine go so far as to maintain that the amount of probability need not be very great. So long as it is not certain that the act in question is forbidden it may be permitted. The object of which teaching is not that which ought to be the object of all moral teaching, viz. to save beings with immortal souls from making serious mistakes of conduct, but to enable beings with strong desires and passions to gratify them without scruple. The moral law is not so much explained as explained away. The very titles of some of the treatises in which the doctrine of Probabilism is advocated indicate their tendency, *e.g.* "The Art of Perpetual Enjoyment."[1] To all such special pleading, and making the Word of God of none effect by human glosses, the simple principles laid down by St. Paul and St. James are the best antidote: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" and "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

[1] *Ars Semper Gaudendi*, by Alphonso de Sarasa, a Flemish theologian of Spanish extraction, 1741. For the fullest account of the history of Probabilism see the great work by Döllinger and Reusch, *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten in der Römisch-katholischen Kirche* (Nördlingen, 1889).

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FOLLIES AND INIQUITIES OF THE RICH; THEIR MISERABLE END.

"Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you."—St. James v. 1-6.

HERE, if anywhere in the Epistle, the writer glances aside from the believing Jews of the Dispersion, to whom the letter as a whole is addressed, and in a burst of righteous indignation which reminds us of passages in the old Hebrew Prophets, denounces members of the twelve tribes who not even in name are Christians. In the preceding section such a transition is in preparation. When he is condemning the godless presumption of those seekers after wealth who dared, without thought of their own frailty and of God's absolute control over their lives and fortunes, to think and speak confidently of their schemes for future gains, he seems to be thinking almost as much of unbelieving Jews as of those who have accepted the Gospel. Here

he appears for the moment to have left the latter entirely out of sight, and to be addressing those wealthy Jews who not only continued the policy and shared the guilt of the opponents and murderers of Christ, but by scandalous tyranny and injustice oppressed their poor brethren, many of whom were probably Christians. The severity of the condemnation is not the only or the main reason for thinking that the paragraph is addressed to unconverted Jews. The first ten verses of chapter iv. are very severe; and there also, as here, the affectionate form of address, "brethren," so frequent elsewhere in the Epistle, is wanting; but there is no doubt that those ten verses, like the paragraphs which immediately precede and follow them, are addressed to Christians. What is so exceptional in the passage now under consideration is *the entire absence of any exhortation to repentance*, or of any indication that there is still hope of being reconciled to the offended Jehovah. They are to "weep and howl," not in penitence, but in despair. The end is at hand; the day of reckoning is approaching; and it is a fearful account which awaits them. In this respect there is a very marked difference between this paragraph and the one which follows it. In both the nearness of the Day of Judgment is the motive; but this nearness is to "the rich" a terror, to "the brethren" a comfort. This difference would be very difficult to explain if both paragraphs were addressed to believing Jews.

Throughout the Epistle there are strains which sound like echoes from the Prophets of the Old Testament, with whom St. James has much in common; but the passage before us is specially in their spirit. It would not surprise us to meet with it in Isaiah or Jeremiah.

One or two similar passages are worth comparing. "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled, and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou hast ceased to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou hast made an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee" (Isa. xxxiii. 1). "Woe to him that getteth an evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the hand of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, by cutting off many peoples, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it" (Hab. ii. 9). In the New Testament the passage which most resembles it is our Lord's denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. xxiii. 13-36).

"Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you." We have the same combination of words in Isaiah: "In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth: on their housetops, and in their broad places, every one *howleth, weeping* abundantly" (xv. 3). And in an earlier chapter we have a still closer parallel to the spirit of this verse: "*Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand*" (xiii. 6). The miseries to which St. James alludes are those which shall befall them at "the coming of the Lord" (ver. 8). It is the impending judgment of the tyrannous rich that is primarily in his mind. He may also have foreseen something of the horrors of the Jewish war and the destruction of Jerusalem, and in accordance with Christ's prophecy may have considered these calamities typical of the judgment, or part and parcel of it. In the Jewish war the wealthy classes suffered terribly. Against

them, as having been friendly to the Romans, and having employed Roman influence in oppressing their own countrymen, the fury of the fanatical party of the Zealots was specially directed; and although the blow fell first and heaviest upon the Jews in Jerusalem and Judæa, yet it was felt by all Jews throughout the world.

They imagined themselves to be rich; they were really most poor and most miserable. So sure is the doom that is coming upon them, that in prophetical style St. James begins to speak of it as already here; like a seer, he has it all before his eyes. "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted." We have here three kinds of possessions indicated. First, stores of various kinds of goods. These are "corrupted;" they have become rotten and worthless. Secondly, rich garments, which in the East are often a very considerable portion of a wealthy man's possessions. They have been stored up so jealously and selfishly that insects have preyed upon them and ruined them. And thirdly, precious metals. These have become tarnished and rusted, through not having been put to any rational use. Everywhere their avarice has been not only sin, but folly. It has failed of its sinful object. The unrighteous hoarding has tended not to wealth, but to ruin. And thus the rust of their treasures becomes "a testimony against them." In the ruin of their property their own ruin is portrayed; and just as corruption, and the moths, and the rust consume their goods, so shall the fire of God's judgment consume the owners and abusers of them. They have reserved all this store for their selfish enjoyment, but God has reserved them for His righteous anger.

"Ye laid up your treasure in the last days." *There* was the monstrous folly of it. The end of all things was close at hand; "the last days" had already begun; and these besotted graspers after wealth were still heaping up treasures which they would never have any opportunity of using. The Authorized Version spoils this by a small, but rather serious, mistranslation. It has, "Ye have heaped up treasure together *for* the last days," instead of "*in* the last days" (ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις). The case is precisely that which Christ foretold: "As were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man" (Matt. xxiv. 37-39). "Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed" (Luke xvii. 28-30).

That the "last days" mean the days immediately preceding the Second Advent can scarcely be doubted. The context renders this very probable, and the exhortation in the next section renders it practically certain. "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for *the coming of the Lord is at hand.* Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, *the Judge standeth before the doors.*" That the first Christians believed that Jesus Christ would return in glory during the lifetime of many who were then

living, will hardly be disputed by any one who is acquainted with the literature of the Apostolic age and of the period immediately following. Nor, perhaps, will many at the present time care to dispute that this erroneous opinion was shared, for a time at any rate, even by Apostles. "Ye are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," says St. Peter (1 Peter i. 5). "We that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep" (1 Thess. iv. 15; *cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 51); and again, writing some years later, "In the last days grievous times shall come," about which Timothy is to be on his guard, says St. Paul (2 Tim. iii. 1). And much nearer to the close of the Apostolic age we have St. John telling his little children that "it is the last hour" (1 John ii. 18). Some twenty or thirty years later St. Ignatius writes to the Ephesians, "These are the last times. Henceforth let us be reverent; let us fear the longsuffering of God, lest it turn into a judgment against us. For either let us fear the wrath which is to come, or let us love the grace which now is" (xi.).

Only very gradually did the Christian Church attain to something like a true perspective as to the duration of Christ's kingdom upon earth. Only very gradually did even the Apostles obtain a clear vision as to the nature of the kingdom which their Lord had founded and left in their charge, for them to occupy until He came. Pentecost did not at once give them perfect insight into the import of their own commission. Much still remained to be learned, slowly, by experience. And if this was the case with Apostles, we need not wonder that it was so with James, the Lord's brother. It is remarkable that Christ's solemn warning

against speculating as to the time of His return seems to have made only partial impression upon the disciples. "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark xiii. 32, 33). But it is our gain that they were allowed for a time to hold a belief that the Lord would return very speedily. The Epistles and Gospels were written by men under the influence of that belief, and such influence is a very considerable guarantee for the honesty of the writers. It was because the rich whom St. James here denounces had no such belief in a speedy judgment, indeed had very little thought of a judgment at all, that they were guilty of such folly and iniquity.

Having indicated their folly in amassing wealth which was no blessing to themselves or others, but simply deteriorated by being hoarded, St. James passes on to point out their iniquity. And first of all he mentions the gross injustice which is frequently inflicted by these wealthy employers of labour upon those who work for them. The payment of the wages which have been earned is either unfairly delayed or not paid at all. "Behold, the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out." Several passages in the Old Testament appear to be in the writer's mind. "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: *in his day thou shalt give him his hire*, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he *cry* against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee" (Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; *cf.* 17, and Lev. xix. 13). "And I will come

near you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against. . . those that *oppress the hireling in his wages*, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn away the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord" (Mal. iii. 5; *cf.* Jer. xxii. 13). Perhaps also, "Their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage" (Exod. ii. 23); and "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen. iv. 10). The frequency with which the subject is mentioned[1] seems to show that the evil which St. James here denounces had long been a common sin among the Jews. Tobit, in his charge to his son, says, "What is hateful to thee do not thou to others. Let not the wages of any man, which hath wrought for thee, tarry with thee (abide with thee all night), but give him it out of hand" (Tobit iv. 14). And in Ecclesiasticus, which St. James seems so often to have in his thoughts, we read, "The bread of the needy is the life of the poor: he that defraudeth him thereof (ὁ ἀποστερῶν αὐτήν) is a man of blood. He that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him; and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire (ὁ ἀποστερῶν μισθόν μισθίου)[2] is a blood-shedder" (Ecclus. xxxiv. 21, 22).

But none of these passages determine for us a point of some interest in the construction used by St. James. The words translated "*of* you," in "of you kept back by fraud," literally mean "*from* you" (ἀφ' ὑμῶν, not ὑφ' ὑμῶν). Two explanations are suggested: 1. The fraudulent action proceeds *from* them, and hence "from" becomes nearly equivalent to "by;" and the

[1] In addition to the passages quoted in the text see Job vii. 1, 2; ix. 24; xii. 5, 6; xxiv. 1-12; xxxi. 38, 39.

[2] It is uncertain whether the word which St. James uses is ἀπεστερημένος or ἀφυστερημένος.

use of "from" (*ἀπό*), rather than "by" (*ὑπό*), is all the more natural because the word for "kept back by fraud" has the former preposition compounded with it. 2. "From you," being placed between "kept back by fraud" and "crieth out" (*ὁ ἀπεστερημένος ἀφ' ὑμῶν κράζει*), may go with either, and it will be better to take it with "crieth out:" "The hire kept back by fraud *crieth out from you*." The wrongfully detained wages are with the rich employers, and therefore it is from the place where they are detained that their cry goes up to heaven. The passage quoted above from Exodus ii. 23 slightly favours this view, for there the Septuagint has, "Their cry came up unto God *from their labours*" (*ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων*); but the passages are not really parallel.

The word used for "fields" (*χώρας*) is worth noting. It implies extensive lands, and therefore adds point to the reproach. The men who own such large properties are not under the temptations to fraud which beset the needy, and it is scandalous that those who can so well afford to pay what is due should refuse. Moreover, the labour of mowing and reaping such fields must be great, and therefore the labourers have well earned their wage. The words "into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" probably come from Isaiah (v. 9), and perhaps St. James was led to them by the thought that these extensive fields are the result of fraud or violence; for the verse which precedes the words in Isaiah runs thus: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!" No other New Testament writer uses the expression "the Lord of Sabaoth," although St. Paul once quotes it from Isaiah (Rom. ix. 29). Bede may be right in thinking

that its point here is that the rich fancy that the poor have no protector; whereas the Lord of hosts hears their cry. And there is possibly another point in mowers and reapers being selected as the representatives of all hired labourers. Calvin suggests that it is specially iniquitous that those whose toil supplies us with food should themselves be reduced to starvation; and to this it has been added that the hard-heartedness of the grasping employers is indeed conspicuous when not even the joy of the harvest moves them to pay the poor who work for them their hardly earned wage.

The second feature in the iniquity of the rich is the voluptuous and prodigal life which they lead themselves, at the very time that they inflict such hardships upon the poor. "Ye lived delicately on the earth, and took your pleasure; ye nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter." The aorists should perhaps be translated as aorists throughout these verses: "Ye laid up your treasure, . . . ye lived delicately," etc. rather than, "Ye *have* laid up, ye *have* lived," etc. The point of view is that of the Day of Judgment, when these wealthy sinners are confronted by the enormities which they committed during their lives. But it is a case in which it is quite permissible to render the Greek aorist by the English perfect. "On the earth" may either mean "during your lifetime," or may be in contrast to "entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." All the while that the cry against their iniquity was ascending to *heaven*, as an accumulating charge that would at last overwhelm them, they were living in luxury *on earth*, thinking nothing of the wrath to come. It was the converse of the old Epicurean doctrine, so graphically described by the Laureate in "The Lotus-eaters." There it is the gods

who "lie beside their nectar" in ceaseless enjoyment, "careless of mankind," who send up useless lamentations, which provoke no more than a smile among the neglectful deities. Here it is the men who revel in boundless luxury, careless of the righteous God, whose vengeance they provoke by persistent neglect of His commands.

The meaning of "in a day of slaughter" is not easily determined. The "as"—"*as* in a day of slaughter"—must certainly be omitted. It was inserted to make more evident one of the possible interpretations of "day of slaughter." "Ye fattened your heart with perpetual banqueting, as if life were made up of killing and eating." "And in that day did the Lord, the Lord of hosts, call to weeping and to mourning, and baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" (Isaiah xxii. 12, 13). If this be the idea which is expressed by the words in question, then the meaning would be, "Ye fared sumptuously every day." But it is possible that "in a day of slaughter" here balances "in the last days" just above. As the folly of heaping up treasure was augmented by the fact that it was done when the end of all things was at hand, so the iniquity of voluptuous living was augmented by the fact that their own destruction was at hand. In this case the wealthy owners, like stalled oxen, were unconsciously fattening themselves for the slaughter. Instead of sacrificing themselves to God's love and mercy, they had sacrificed and devoured their poor brethren. They had fed themselves, and not the flock; and unwittingly they were preparing themselves as a sacrifice to God's wrath.

For a sacrifice, either willingly or unwillingly, every one must be.

Did any of those whom St. James here condemns remember his words when, a few years later, thousands of the Jews of the Dispersion were once more gathered together at Jerusalem for the sacrifice of the Passover, and there became unwilling sacrifices to God's slow but sure vengeance? As already pointed out, it was the wealthy among them who specially suffered. Their prosperity and their friendship with the Romans provoked the envy and enmity of the fanatical Zealots, and they perished in a day of slaughter. Josephus tells us that it was all one whether the richer Jews stayed in the city during the siege or tried to escape to the Romans; for they were equally destroyed in either case. Every such person was put to death, on the pretext that he was preparing to desert, but in reality that the plunderers might get his possessions. People who were evidently half-starved were left unmolested, when they declared that they had nothing; but those whose bodies showed no signs of privation were tortured to make them reveal the treasures which they were supposed to have concealed (*Bell. Jud.* V. x. 2).

"Ye condemned, ye killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you." Does this refer to the condemnation and death of Jesus Christ? This interpretation has found advocates in all ages—Cassiodorus, Bede, Œcumenius, Grotius, Bengel, Lange, and other modern commentators; and it is certainly attractive. St. Peter, addressing the Jews in Solomon's Porch, says, "But ye denied the Holy and *Righteous One*, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life" (Acts iii. 14, 15). St. Stephen, in his speech before the Sanhedrin, asks, "Which of the pro-

phets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which showed before of the coming of *the Righteous One;* of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers" (Acts vii. 52; *cf.* xxii. 14, and 1 Pet. iii. 18). It is certainly no objection to this interpretation that St. James uses the aorist—"ye condemned, ye killed." That tense might fittingly be used either of a course of action in the past, as in the aorists immediately preceding, or of a single action, as of Abraham's offering Isaac (ii. 21). Nor is it any objection that in "He doth not resist you" St. James changes to the present tense. In any case the change from past to present has to be explained, and it is as easy to explain it of the present long-suffering of Christ, or of His abandoning them to their wickedness, as of the habitual meekness of the righteous man. Nor, again, is it any objection that the Jews addressed in this Epistle could not rightly be charged with the condemnation and death of Christ, for twenty or thirty years had elapsed since that event. It is by no means improbable that among the Jews then living there were many who had cried "Crucify Him" on Good Friday; and even if there were not, the words of St. James are quite justifiable. The Crucifixion was in a very real sense the act of the whole nation, far more so than was the murder of Zacharias the son of Jehoiada, and yet Jesus says to the Jews respecting Zacharias, "whom *ye* slew between the sanctuary and the altar." If at the present day the English might be told that they condemned and killed Charles I., and the French be told that they condemned and killed Louis XVI., much more might the Jews in the middle of the first century be said to have condemned and killed Jesus Christ.

But nevertheless, this attractive and tenable inter-

pretation is probably not the right one; the context is against it. It is the evil that is inherent in class tyrannizing over *class* that is condemned, the rich oppressing the poor, and the godless persecuting the godly. "The righteous one" is here not an individual, but the representative of a class. The iniquitous violence which slew Jesus Christ and His martyrs, James the son of Zebedee and Stephen, *illustrates* what St. James says here, just as his own martyrdom does; but it does not follow from this that he is alluding to any one of these events in particular. The Book of Wisdom seems once more to be in the writer's mind: "Let us oppress the poor righteous man; let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the ancient grey hairs of the aged. . . . Let us lie in wait for the righteous; because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings: he upbraideth us with our offending the law, and objecteth to our infamy the transgressings of our education. . . . He is grievous to us even to behold: for his life is not like other men's; his ways are of another fashion. . . . Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture, that we may know his meekness, and prove his patience. Let us condemn him with a shameful death; for by his own saying he shall be respected" (ii. 10-20).

Julius Cæsar on one occasion stated his financial position by confessing that he needed half a million of money in order to be worth nothing. The spiritual condition of many prosperous men might be expressed in a similar way. Cæsar never allowed lack of funds to stand between him and his political aims; when he had nothing he borrowed at enormous interest. So also with us. In pursuing our worldly aims we sink

deeper and deeper in spiritual ruin, and accumulate debts for an eternal bankruptcy. Riches are not a whit less perilous to the soul now than they were in the first century, and yet how few among the wealthy really believe that they are perilous at all. The wisdom of our forefathers has placed in the Litany a petition which every well-to-do person should say with his whole heart: "In all time of our *wealth, Good Lord, deliver us.*"

CHAPTER XXIV.

PATIENCE IN WAITING. THE ENDURANCE OF JOB. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MENTION OF JOB BY ST. JAMES.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged; behold, the Judge standeth before the doors. Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the Name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed which endured: ye have heard of the endurance of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful."—ST. JAMES v. 7-11.

"BE patient, therefore, brethren." The storm of indignation is past, and from this point to the end of the Epistle St. James writes in tones of tenderness and affection. In the paragraph before us he, as it were, rounds off his letter, bringing it back to the point from which he started; so that what follows (vv. 12-20) is of the nature of a postscript or appendix. He began his letter with the exhortation, "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold trials; knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing" (i. 2-4). He draws to a close with the charge, "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord."

The "therefore" shows that this sympathetic exhortation of the brethren is closely connected with the stern denunciation of the rich in the preceding paragraph. The connexion is obvious. These brethren are in the main identical with the righteous poor who are so cruelly oppressed by the rich; and St. James offers them consolation mainly on two grounds: First, their sufferings will not last for ever; on the contrary, the end of them is near at hand. Secondly, the end of them will bring not only relief, but reward.

As has been already pointed out (p. 279), St. James evidently shared the belief, which prevailed in the Apostolic age, that Jesus Christ would very speedily return in glory to punish the wicked and reward the righteous. This belief, as Neander observes, was very natural: "Christ Himself had not chosen to give any information respecting the time of his coming. Nay, He had expressly said that the Father had reserved the decision to Himself alone (Mark xiii. 32); that even the Son could determine nothing respecting it. But still, the longing desire of the Apostolic Church was directed with eager haste to the appearing of the Lord. The whole Christian period seemed only as the transition-point to the eternal, and thus as something that must soon be passed. As the traveller, beholding from afar the object of all his wanderings, overlooks the windings of the intervening way, and believes himself already near his goal, so it seemed to them, as their eye was fixed on that consummation of the whole course of events on earth."

Thus, by a strange but unperceived incongruity, St. James makes the unconscious impatience of primitive Christianity a basis for his exhortation to conscious patience. Early Christians, in their eagerness for the

return of their Lord, impatiently believed that His return was imminent; and St. James uses this belief as an argument for patient waiting and patient endurance. It is only for a short time that they will have to wait and endure, and then the rich reward will be reaped. Ploughing and harrowing are toilsome and painful, but they have to be gone through, and then, after no intolerable waiting, the harvest comes.

Above, when St. James was rebuking his readers for their presumptuous confidence respecting their future plans, he reminded them of the shortness of life. "What is your life? For ye are a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (iv. 14). Here the shortness of the interval between the present moment and the end of all things is urged as a reason both for circumspection and for patience. In both cases, with his characteristic fondness for illustrations drawn from nature, he employs physical phenomena to enforce his lesson. In the one case life is a vapour, not substantial at any time, and soon dispersed;[1] in the other case life is the work and the waiting which must precede the harvest.

The key-note of the whole passage is *patience*, which in one form or another occurs six times in five verses In the original two different words are used—one (*μακροθυμεῖν* and *μακροθυμία*) four times in the first four verses; and the other (*ὑπομένειν* and *ὑπομενή*)

[1] As already pointed out, this metaphor is perhaps a reminiscence of the Book of Job, to which St. James alludes in the passage before us. He was evidently fond of the sapiential writings, to which Job is akin. "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more" (Job vii. 6, 9). See note I., p. 281.

twice in the last verse, where we certainly need "the *endurance* of Job" rather than "the *patience* of Job," in order to preserve the transition from the one word to the other. "Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of *patience* (μακροθυμίας) the prophets who spake in the Name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed which *endured* (τοὺς ὑπομείναντας): ye have heard of the *endurance* (ὑπομενήν) of Job." It was perhaps because "the *patience* of Job" has become a proverbial formula that the Revisers banished "endurance" to the margin, instead of placing it in the text.[1] The two words are not infrequently found together (2 Cor. vi. 4-6; Col. i. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 10; Clement of Rome, lviii.; Ignatius, *Ephes.* iii.). The difference between the two is, on the whole, this, that the first is the long-suffering which does not retaliate upon oppressive persons, the second the endurance which does not succumb under oppressive things. The persecuted prophets exhibited the one; the afflicted Job exhibited the other. The oppressed and poor Christians whom St. James addresses are able to practise both these forms of patience, which Chrysostom extols as the "queen of the virtues."

There is a remarkable diversity of readings in the illustration about the husbandman's waiting. Some authorities make him wait for the early and latter *rain*, others for the early and latter *fruit*. The best witnesses leave the substantive to be understood, and this is doubtless the original reading; it accounts for the other two. Some copyists thought that rain was to be understood, and therefore inserted it; while others for

[1] The Rhemish Version distinguishes the words—"be patient and "patience" for the one, "suffer" and "sufferance" for the other, the Vulgate having *patientia* and *sufferentia*.

a similar reason inserted fruit. No doubt it is rain that is intended, in accordance with several passages in the Old Testament (Deut. xi. 14; Jer. v. 24; Joel ii. 23; Zech. x. 1). The rains of autumn and of spring are meant, not "morning rain and evening rain" as Luther renders it in his version; and no moral or spiritual facts are symbolized by these natural phenomena, such as the penitential tears of youth and of old age, which would not fit the context. The point of the simile lies in the patient waiting, not in that which is waited for.

"Murmur not, brethren, one against another." The literal meaning of the Greek is "*Groan* not;" that is, "Grumble not." Earlier English versions have "Grudge not;" and "grudge" once had the meaning of "murmur," as in "They will run here and there for meat, and *grudge* if they be not satisfied" (Ps. lix. 15). It is altogether a mistake to suppose that "one against another" includes the wealthy oppressors spoken of in the preceding section. It is the common experience of every one that men who are irritated and exasperated by trying persons or circumstances are liable to vent their vexation on those who are in no way responsible for what tries them. St. James is well aware of this danger, and puts his readers on their guard against it. "Be long-suffering," he says, "and do not retaliate on those who maltreat you; and do not let the smart of your troubles betray you into impatience towards one another. He who is to judge your oppressors will judge you also, and He is close at hand." We can hardly doubt that Christ's saying, "Judge not, *that ye be not judged*" (Matt. vii. 1), is in his mind. The way to lighten one's burden is not to groan over it, still less to murmur against those who are in the same case, but

to try to console and help them. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." It is a good thing to take as an example of patience the prophets and others among God's suffering saints; but it is a still better thing to give such an example ourselves.

By the prophets St. James no doubt means the prophets of the Old Testament—Elijah, Jeremiah, and others. It is not likely that he includes any of the persecuted disciples of the New Testament, such as James the son of Zebedee, and Stephen. Here again we seem to have an echo of Christ's words: "*Blessed* are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you" (comp. "We call them *blessed* which endured"): "for so persecuted they the *prophets* which were before you" (Matt. v. 11, 12). It is the ceaseless reproach against the Jews that they boasted that theirs were the prophets, and yet were the persecutors of the prophets. "The children of Israel . . . have slain Thy prophets with the sword," says Elijah (1 Kings xix. 10, 14). "That I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets," says God to Elisha (2 Kings ix. 7). They "slew Thy prophets which testified against them to turn them again to Thee," says Nehemiah, in his prayer (Neh. ix. 26). "Your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion," is the accusation of Jeremiah (ii. 30). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her!" is the lamentation of Christ (Matt. xxiii. 37). And Stephen, just before he was himself added to the number of the slain, asks, "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which showed before of the coming of the Righteous One" (Acts vii. 52). Certainly those who try to do

God's work in the world have no lack of examples of patient suffering for such work. The reasonable question would seem to be, not, "Why should I be made to suffer for endeavouring to do good?" but, "Why should I *not* be made to suffer? Seeing what others have had to endure, why should I be spared?"

"Ye have heard of the endurance of Job." It is possible that this refers specially to the reading of the Book of Job in public service; but there is no need to restrict the hearing to such occasions. We need not doubt that the endurance of Job was a familiar topic among the Jews long before this Epistle was written, and independently of the book being read in the synagogues. Yet, in spite of this familiarity, the passage before us is the only reference in the whole of the New Testament to the story of Job, and there is only one quotation from the Book: "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (Job v. 13) is quoted by St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 19). There are several loose quotations from it in the Epistle of Clement of Rome (xvii., xx., xxvi., xxxix., lvi.); and the remarkable insertion in the Vulgate Version of Tobit ii. 12-15 is worthy of quotation: "This trial the Lord *therefore* permitted to happen to him, that an example might be given to posterity of his patience, as also of holy Job. For whereas he had always feared God from his infancy, and kept His commandments, he repined not against God because the evil of blindness had befallen him, but continued immovable in the fear of God, giving thanks to God all the days of his life. For as the kings[1] insulted over holy Job, so his relations and

[1] *Reges.* "So Job's friends are here called, because they were princes in their respective territories." Note in the Douay Version, from which the translation of the passage is taken.

kinsmen mocked at his life, saying, Where is thy hope, for which thou gavest alms, and buriedest the dead? But Tobias rebuked them, saying, Speak not so; for we are the children of saints, and look for that life which God will give to them that never change their faith from Him."

"Ye have heard of the endurance of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful." A well-supported, but, on the whole, less probable reading, gives us the imperative, "*see* the end of the Lord," instead of the indicative, "ye have seen" (ἴδετε, instead of εἴδετε). If it be correct, it may be taken either with what precedes or with what follows: either, "Ye have heard of the endurance of Job: see also the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful;" or, "Ye have heard of the endurance of Job and the end of the Lord: see that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful."

But a more important question than either the reading or the division of the clauses is the meaning of the expression "the end of the Lord." Bede follows Augustine in understanding it of the death of Christ, which no doubt many of the readers of the Epistle had witnessed—"*Exitum quoque Domini in cruce quem longanimiter suscepit, adstantes ipsi vidistis*": and in this interpretation Bede is followed by Wetstein, Lange, and some other modern writers. It cannot be considered as probable. St. James would hardly couple the endurance of Job with the death of Christ in this abrupt way; and the words which follow—"that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful"—do not fit on to this interpretation. "The end of the Lord" much more probably means the end to which the Lord brought the sufferings of Job. It may have special

reference to the concluding portion of the Book of Job, in which Jehovah is represented as bringing the argument to a close: "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" etc., etc. (xxxviii.—xlii.). This appearance of Jehovah to end the trials of Job would then be analogous to the appearance of Christ to end the trials of the persecuted Christians; and it is possible that the combination "ye have heard . . . and have seen" was suggested by the last words of Job: "*I have heard of* Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye *seeth* Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (xlii. 5, 6).

Stier remarks that the mention of Job in Ezekiel (xiv. 14, 16, 20), and here by St. James, shows us "that the man Job actually lived, like Noah, Daniel, and all the prophets; that the narrative of his life is not a didactic poem, but a real history." But is that a necessary conclusion? Let us leave on one side the question whether or no there really was such a person as Job, who experienced what is recorded in the book which bears his name, and let us consider whether the mention of him by Ezekiel and by St. James proves that there was such a person. It proves nothing of the sort. It shows no more than this, that the story of Job was well known, and was employed for moral and spiritual instruction. Let us suppose that the Book of Job is a parable, like that of Dives and Lazarus. Would the fact that its contents are not historical prevent Ezekiel or St. James from speaking of Job as a well-known person of exemplary life? There would be nothing unnatural in coupling together Dives, who is probably an imaginary person, and the

rich young man, who is certainly a real person, as examples of men to whom great wealth has proved disastrous, nor, again, in speaking of Lazarus and the penitent thief as instances of souls that had passed from great earthly suffering to the rest of Paradise. Such combinations would not commit the writer or speaker who made use of them to the belief that Dives and Lazarus were historical persons. Why, then, should the fact that an inspired writer couples Job with Noah and Daniel commit *us* to the belief that Job is a real person? He may have been so, just as Lazarus may have been so, but the mention of him by Ezekiel and by St. James does not prove that he was. We know too little about the effects of inspiration to be justified in saying dogmatically that an inspired writer would never speak of an unhistorical person as an example to be imitated. Is the merchant who sold all that he had in order to buy one pearl of great price an historical person? and is he not put before us as an example to be imitated? It is quite possible that the story of Job is in the main a narrative of facts, and not an inspired fiction; but the mention of him by Ezekiel and by St. James is no proof of it. It is neither fair nor prudent to cite either of them as witnesses to the historical character of the Book of Job. It is not fair, because we are ignorant of their opinion on the subject, and are also ignorant as to whether their opinion on the subject would be under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And it is not prudent, because it may be demonstrated hereafter that the story of Job is not historical; and then we shall have pledged the testimony of inspired persons to the truth of a narrative which is, after all, fictitious. If St. Paul may cite Jannes and Jambres as instances

of malignant opposition to the truth, without compelling us to believe that those names are historical,[1] St. James may quote Job as an example of patient endurance, without obliging us to believe that Job is an historical personage. In each case the historical character of the illustrations must be decided on other grounds than the fact that they are employed by writers who were inspired.[2]

Questions of this kind are among the many spheres in which we need that virtue on which St. James here insists with such simple earnestness—patience. When certainty has not been attained, and perhaps is not attainable, let us learn to wait patiently in uncertainty. Was there ever such a person as Job? Who wrote the Book of Job? What is its date? Does inspiration produce infallibility? and if so, what are the limits to such infallibility? There are men to whom uncertainty on such questions as these seems intolerable. They cannot "learn to labour and to wait;" they cannot work patiently, and wait patiently, until a complete solution is found. And hence they hurry to a

[1] See *The Pastoral Epistles*, in this series, pp. 379-84 (Hodder and Stoughton, 1888).

[2] That the Book of Job is not pure history is plain from (1) the dialogue between Jehovah and Satan, and the addresses ascribed to the Almighty in the body of the poem; (2) the dramatic character of Job's calamities, man and nature alternately inflicting blows at him, and in each case just one messenger escaping; (3) the dramatic character of his compensation, his goods being exactly doubled, and his family being made exactly what it was before; (4) the elaboration of the dialogue between Job and his friends. On the other hand, it is not likely that it is pure invention. We have no evidence of literary power equal to such invention at the early date to which the Book of Job must be assigned, viz. before the Return from the Captivity; and the writer's object would be better attained if he took an historical person, than if he invented one, as his centre.

definite conclusion, support it by evidence that is not relevant, and affirm that it is demonstrated by what is perhaps relevant, but is far short of proof. Intellectual probation is part of our moral probation in this life, and it is a discipline much needed in an age of great mental activity. Impatience of the intellect is a common blemish, and it is disastrous both to him who allows himself to be conquered by it and to the cause of truth. He does good service both to himself and to others, who cultivates a dread of jumping to unproved conclusions, and who in speaking and writing watchfully distinguishes what is certain from what is only probable, and what is probable from what is only not known to be untrue.

The great example of patience is not given by St. James, although we can read it into his words. In a sense not meant by him there is the Husbandman, who waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, until it receive the early and the latter rain. There is that precious harvest of human souls which must receive and welcome the dew of God's grace before it is ready for His garner. On some it has never yet fallen; on some it has fallen, but as yet in vain; and meanwhile the Husbandman waiteth, "being patient over it," until it receive the one thing needful. Through long, long centuries He has been waiting, and He continues so doing. St. Augustine tells us why. God is "patient, because He is eternal" (*patiens quia æternus*). He who is "from everlasting to everlasting" can afford to wait. He waits patiently for us, generation after generation. Can we not wait for Him one hour? Let us patiently abide until "the end of the Lord" comes, the end which He has prepared for us, and towards which all things under His guiding hand are

working. When we have seen it we shall once more see "that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful."[1]

[1] The word for "full of pity" (*πολύσπλαγχνος*) was possibly coined by St. James himself; it occurs nowhere else. It might be rendered "large-hearted." A few inferior MSS. have *πολυεύσπλαγχνος*, a word which is found in ecclesiastical and Byzantine writers. The simpler *εὔσπλαγχνος* occurs 1 Pet. iii. 8; Eph. iv. 32; and in the Prayer of Manasses; *ὅτι σὺ εἶ κύριος ὕψιστος, εὔσπλαγχνος, μακρόθυμος, καὶ πολυέλεος.* The unique *πολύσπλαγχνος* looks like a combination of *πολυέλεος* and *εὔσπλαγχνος*. Comp. Joel ii. 13; Jonah iv. 2. The word for "merciful" occurs Luke vi. 36 (comp. Col. iii. 12) and frequently in the Septuagint; *e.g.* Ecclus. ii. 11; *οἰκτίρμων καὶ ἐλεήμων ὁ κύριος.*

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PROHIBITION OF SWEARING. THE RELATION OF THE LANGUAGE OF ST. JAMES TO RECORDED SAYINGS OF CHRIST.

"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment."—ST. JAMES v. 12.

THE main portion of the Epistle is already concluded. St. James has worked through his chief topics back to the point from which he started, viz. the blessedness of steadfast and patient endurance of trials and temptations. But one or two other subjects occur to him, and he reopens his letter to add them by way of a farewell word of counsel.

One of the leading thoughts in the letter has been warning against sins of the tongue (i. 19, 26; iii. 1-12; iv. 11, 13; v. 9). He has spoken against talkativeness, unrestrained speaking, love of correcting others, railing, cursing, boasting, murmuring. One grievous form of sinful speech he has not mentioned particularly; and about this he adds a strong word of warning in this postscript to the Epistle: "Above all things, my brethren, swear not."

Two questions are raised by this remarkable prohibition—first, the exact meaning of it, especially whether it forbids swearing for any purpose whatever; and

secondly, its relation to the almost identical prohibition uttered by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 35, 36). It will be obvious that whatever this relation may be, the meaning of our Lord's injunction determines the meaning of St. James in his injunction. It is hardly worth arguing that he did not mean either more or less than Christ meant.

I. The immediate context of the prohibition is worth noting in each case; it seems to throw light upon the scope of the prohibition. Jesus Christ, after saying "Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, . . . nor by the earth. . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay," goes on to forbid retaliation of injuries, and to enjoin love towards enemies. St. James enjoins long-suffering towards enemies, thence goes on to forbid swearing, and then again returns to the subject of how to behave under affliction and ill-treatment: "Is any among you suffering? let him pray." Prayer, not cursing and swearing, is the right method of finding relief. There is, therefore, some reason for thinking that both in the Sermon on the Mount and here the prohibition of swearing has special reference to giving vent to one's feelings in oaths when one is exasperated by injury or adversity. No kind of oath is allowable for any such purpose.

But it is quite clear that this is not the whole meaning of the injunction in either place. "But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay;" and, "But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay," manifestly refers to strengthening affirmations and negations by adding to them the sanction of an oath. There was an old saying, now unhappily quite grotesque in its incongruity with facts, that "an Englishman's word is as good as his bond." What Christ and St. James say is

that a Christian's word should be as good as his oath. There ought to be no need of oaths. Anything over and above simple affirming or denying "cometh of the evil one." It is because Satan, the father of lies, has introduced falsehood into the world that oaths have come into use. Among Christians there should be no untruthfulness, and therefore no oaths. The use of oaths is an index of the presence of evil; it is a symptom of the prevalence of falsehood.

But the use of oaths is not only a sign of the existence of mischief, it is also apt to be productive of mischief. It is apt to produce a belief that there are two kinds of truth, one of which it is a serious thing to violate, viz. when you are on your oath; but the other of which it is a harmless, or at least a venial thing to violate, viz. when falsehood is only falsehood, and not perjury. And this, both among Jews and among Christians, produces the further mischievous refinement that some oaths are more binding than others, and that only when the most stringent form of oath is employed is there any real obligation to speak the truth. How disastrous all such distinctions are to the interests of truth, abundant experience has testified: for a common result is this;—that people believe that they are free to lie as much as they please, so long as the lie is not supported by the particular kind of oath which they consider to be binding.

Thus much, then, is evident, that both our Lord and St. James forbid the use of oaths (1) as an expression of feeling, (2) as a confirmation of ordinary statements; for the prohibitions plainly mean as much as this, and we know from other sources that these two abuses were disastrously common among both Jews and Gentiles at that time. That converts to Christianity were

exempt from such vices is most improbable; and hence the need that St. James should write as he does on the subject.

But the main question is whether the prohibition is *absolute;* whether our Lord and St. James forbid the use of oaths *for any purpose whatever;* and it must be admitted that the first impression which we derive from their words is that they do. This view is upheld by not a few Christians as the right interpretation of both passages. Christ says, "Swear not *at all* (*μὴ ὀμόσαι ὅλως*). . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay." St. James says, "Swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, *nor by any other oath* (*μήτε ἄλλον τινὰ ὅρκον*): but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay." In both cases we have an unqualified prohibition of what is to be avoided, followed by a plain command as to what is to be done.

But further investigation does not confirm the view which is derived from a first impression as to the meaning of the words. Against it we have, first, the fact that the Mosaic Law not only allowed, but enjoined the taking of an oath in certain circumstances; and Christ would hardly have abrogated the law, and St. James would hardly have contradicted it, without giving some explanation of so unusual a course; secondly, the indisputable practice of the early Church, of St. Paul, and of our Lord Himself.

In Deuteronomy we read, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; and Him shalt thou serve, and *shalt swear by His Name*" (vi. 13); and, "to Him shalt thou cleave, and *by His Name shalt thou swear*" (x. 20). The Psalmist says, "The king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by Him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped" (lxiii. 11).

Isaiah says, "He that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth" (lxv. 16); and still more strongly Jeremiah: "Thou shalt swear, As the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness" (iv. 2); and, "If they will diligently learn the ways of My people, to swear by My Name, As the Lord liveth; even as they taught My people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built up in the midst of My people" (xii. 16. Comp. xxiii. 7, 8). An absolute prohibition of all swearing would have been so surprisingly at variance with these passages of Scripture that it is difficult to believe that it would have been made without any allusion to them. Even the Essenes, who were very strict about swearing, and considered it to be worse than perjury (for a man is condemned already who cannot be believed except upon his oath), imposed "terrific oaths" (ὅρκους φρικώδεις) upon those who wished to enter their community, before admitting them (Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* II. viii. 6, 7; *Ant.* XV. x. 4); and we can hardly suppose that St. James means to take up a more extreme position than that of the Essenes.

But even if we suppose that he does mean this we have still to explain the *practice* of those who were well aware of Christ's command respecting swearing, and certainly had no intention of deliberately violating it. If the first Christians were willing on certain occasions to take certain oaths, it must have been because they were fully persuaded that Jesus Christ had not forbidden them to do so. When called upon by heathen magistrates to take an oath, the distinction which they drew was not between swearing and not swearing, but between taking oaths that committed them to idolatry and oaths which did nothing of the kind. The latter oaths they were willing to take.

Thus Tertullian says that they would not swear by the *genii* of the emperors, because these were supposed to be demons; but by the safety of the emperors they were willing to swear (*Apol.* xxxii.). Origen writes to much the same effect (*Con. Celsum*, viii., lxv.). The oath by the *genius*, or *numen*, or "fortune" (τύχη) of the emperor was recognized as a formula for abjuring Christianity. Thus the proconsul presses Polycarp again and again: "Swear by the genius of Cæsar; swear the oath, and I will release thee" (*Mart. Pol.* ix., x.); and the fear of being betrayed into an act of idolatry was one of the main reasons why the early Christians disliked taking oaths. But there was also the feeling that for Christians oaths ought to be quite unnecessary. Thus Clement of Alexandria says that the true Christian ought to maintain a life calculated to inspire such confidence in those without that an oath would not even be demanded of him. And of course, when he swears, he swears truly; but he is not apt to swear, and rarely has recourse to an oath. And his speaking the truth on oath arises from his harmony with the truth (*Strom.* vii., viii.). Pelagius maintained that all swearing was forbidden; but Augustine contends, on the authority of Scripture, that oaths are not unlawful, although he would have them avoided as much as possible (*Ep.* clvii. Comp. *Epp.* cxxv., cxxvi.).

But there is not only the evidence as to how the primitive Church understood the words of Christ and of St. James; there is also the practice of St. Paul, who frequently calls God to witness that he is speaking the truth (2 Cor. i. 23; xi. 31; xii. 19; Gal. i. 20; Phil. i. 8), or uses other strong asseverations which are certainly more than plain Yea and Nay (Rom. ix. i.; 1 Cor. xv. 31; 2 Cor. i. 18; xi. 10). Augustine quotes

St. Paul in defence of swearing, but adds that St. Paul's swearing, when there was weighty reason for it, is no proof that we may swear whenever we think proper to do so. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews the fact that men swear in order to settle disputes is mentioned without any intimation that the practice is utterly wrong. On the contrary, we are told that God has condescended to do the same, in order to give us all the assurance in His power (vi. 16-18).

Lastly, we have the convincing fact that Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be put upon His oath. After having kept silence for a long time, He was *adjured* by the High Priest to answer; and then He answered at once. The full meaning of the High Priest's words are, "I exact an oath of Thee (ἐξορκίζω σε) by the Living God" (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64). Had this been an unlawful thing for the High Priest to do, our Lord would have kept silence all the more, or would have answered under protest.

II. It remains to consider the relation of the prohibition of swearing in this Epistle to the almost identical prohibition in the Sermon on the Mount. Is St. James quoting Christ's words? and if so, whence did he derive his knowledge of them?

No one who compares the two passages will believe that the similarity between them is accidental. Even if such an hypothesis could reasonably be entertained, it would be shattered by the number of other coincidences which exist between passages in this Epistle and the recorded words of Christ. In this instance we have the largest amount of coincidence; and therefore the discussion of this point has been reserved until this passage was reached, although numerous other cases of coincidence have already occurred.

The remark is sometimes made that there are more quotations of Christ's words in the Epistle of St. James than in all the Epistles of St. Paul, or than in all the other books of the New Testament other than the Gospels. It would be better to word the remark somewhat differently, and say that there are more coincidences which cannot be fortuitous between this Epistle and the recorded words of Christ than in all the Epistles of St. Paul; or that there is far more evidence of the influence of Christ's discourses upon the language of St. James than there is of any such influence upon the language of St. Paul. St. Paul tells us much about Christ and His work, but he very rarely reproduces any of His sayings. With St. James it is exactly the opposite; he says very little indeed about Christ, but, without quoting them as such, he frequently reproduces His words. It will be found that the largest number of these coincidences are between St. James and sayings that are recorded by St. Matthew, especially in the Sermon on the Mount. But this does not warrant us in asserting that St. James must have seen St. Matthew's Gospel or any other written Gospels. The coincidences, as will be seen, are not of a character to show this. Moreover, it is extremely doubtful whether any of the Gospels were written so early as A.D. 62, the latest date which can be given to our Epistle; and if any earlier date be assigned to it, the improbability of the writer's having seen a written Gospel becomes all the greater. The resemblances between the words of St. James and the recorded words of Christ are such as would naturally arise if he had himself heard Christ's teaching, and was consciously or unconsciously reproducing what he remembered of it, rather than such as would be found

if he had had a written document to quote from. If this be so, we have a strong confirmation of the view adopted at the outset, that this Epistle is the work of the Lord's brother, who had personal experience of Christ's conversation, and was independent of both the oral and the written tradition of His teaching. It will be worth while to tabulate the principal coincidences, so that the reader may be able to judge for himself as to their significance. They suffice to show how full the mind of St. James must have been of the teaching of Jesus Christ, and they lead to the highly probable conjecture that in other parts of the Epistle we have reminiscences of Christ's words of which we have no record in the Gospels.[1] It is not likely that St. James has remembered and reproduced only those sayings of which there is something recorded by the Evangelists.

St. Matthew.	St. James.
1. Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (v. 10-12).	Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience (i. 2, 3). Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed which endured (v. 10, 11).
2. Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (v. 48).	And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing (i. 4).
3. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth (vii. 7, 8).	But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (i. 5).

[1] See Salmon's *Introduction to the N.T.*, pp. 221, 500, 4th ed., 1889.

ST. MATTHEW (*continued*).

4. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (v. 3. Comp. Luke vi. 20).

5. Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. . . . And every one that heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand (vii. 21, 26).

6. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy (v. 7).

If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (vi. 15).

With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged (vii. 2).

7. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (vii. 16).

8. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon (vi. 24).

9. Whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted (xxiii. 12).

10. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow (vi. 34).

11. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume (vi. 19).

12. Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne

ST. JAMES (*continued*).

Let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate (i. 9).

Did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom? (ii. 5).

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror (i. 22, 23).

So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment (ii. 12, 13).

Can a fig-tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? (iii. 12).

Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God (iv. 4).

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you (iv. 10).

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow (iv. 14).

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted (v. 2, 3).

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by

St. Matthew (*continued*).	St. James (*continued*).
of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech, be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one (v. 34-37).	the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath. But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment (v. 12).

These twelve parallels are by no means exhaustive, but they are among the most striking. The following are worthy of consideration, although those which have been quoted above are more than sufficient for our purpose :—

St. Matthew	i. 19	.	.	.	St. James	v.	19
„ „	i. 20	.	.	.	„	v.	22
„ „	ii. 8	.	.	.	„	vii.	12
„ „	ii. 10, 11	.	.		„	v.	27
„ „	iii. 17, 18	.	.		„	v.	9
„ „	iv. 3	.	.	.	„	vii.	8

Let us now consider some coincidences between the language of St. James and our Lord's words as recorded by the other three Evangelists.

St. Mark.	St. James.
13. Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt (*διακριθῇ*) in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it (xi. 23). 14. They shall deliver you up to councils; and in synagogues shall ye be beaten (xiii. 9) 15. Know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors (xiii. 29; Matt. xxiv. 33).	If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting (*διακρινόμενος*): for he that doubteth etc. (i. 5, 6). Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? (ii. 6). Behold, the Judge standeth before the doors (v. 9).

St. Luke.	St. James.
16. Woe unto you, ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep (vi. 25).	Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness (iv. 9).
17. Woe unto you that are rich for ye have received your consolation (vi. 24).	Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you (v. 1)
St. John.	**St. James.**
18. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them (xiii. 17).	Being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing (i. 25).
19. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, . . . therefore the world hateth you (xv. 19. Comp. xvii. 14).	Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God (iv. 4).

It will be observed that these reminiscences of the teaching of Christ are all of one kind. They are all of them concerned with the morality of the Gospel, with Christian conduct and Christian life. Not one of them is doctrinal, or gives instruction as to the Christian creed. This, again, is what we might expect if the brother of the Lord is the writer of the Epistle. At the time when he listened to his Divine Brother's teaching he did not believe on Him. The doctrinal part of His discourses was precisely that part which did not impress him; it seemed to him as the wild fancies of an enthusiast (Mark iii. 21). But the moral teaching of Jesus impressed many of those who rejected His claims to be the Messiah, and it is this element which St. James remembers.

Before concluding, let us return to the moral precept contained in the verse which we have been considering: "Above all things, my brethren, swear not." The prohibition has not ceased to be necessary, as our daily

experience proves. The vice of profane swearing (and all swearing about ordinary matters is profane) is a strange one. Where is the pleasure of it? Where, before it becomes a fashion or a habit, is the temptation to it? Where, in any case, is the sense of it? There is pleasure in gluttony, in drunkenness, in lust, in pride, in avarice, in revenge. But where is the pleasure in an oath? The sensualist, the hypocrite, the miser, and the murderer can at least plead strong temptation, can at least urge that they get something, however pitiful, in exchange for eternal loss. But what can the blasphemer plead? what does he get in exchange for his soul? In times of strong excitement it is no doubt a relief to the feelings to use strong language; but what is gained by making the strong language trebly culpable by adding blasphemy to it? Besides which, there is the sadly common case of those who use blasphemous words when there is no temptation to give vent to strong feeling in strong language, who habitually swear in cold blood. Let no one deceive himself with the paltry excuse that he cannot help it, or that there is no harm in it. A resolution to do something disagreeable every time an oath escaped one's lips would soon bring about a cure. And let those who profess to think that there is no harm in idle swearing ask themselves whether they expect to repeat that plea when they give an account for every idle word at the day of judgment (Matt. xii. 36).

CHAPTER XXVI.

WORSHIP THE BEST OUTLET AND REMEDY FOR EXCITEMENT.

THE CONNEXION BETWEEN WORSHIP AND CONDUCT.

"Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise."—St. James v. 13.

THE subject of this verse was probably suggested by that of the preceding one. Oaths are not a right way of expressing one's feelings, however strong they may be, and of whatever kind they may be. There is, however, no need to stifle such feelings, or to pretend to the world that we have no emotions. In this respect, as in many others, Christianity has no sympathy with the precepts of Stoicism or Cynicism. It is not only innocent, but prudent, to seek an outlet for excited feelings; the right and wrong of the matter lie in the *kind* of outlet which we allow ourselves. Language of some kind, and in most cases articulate language, is the natural instrument for expressing and giving vent to our feelings. But we need some strong safeguard, or the consequences of freely giving expression to our emotions in speech will be calamitous. This safeguard is clearly indicated by the rules here laid down by St. James. Let the expression of strongly excited feelings be an act of *worship;* then we shall have an outlet for them which is not likely to involve

us in harmful results. By the very act in which we exhibit our emotions we protect ourselves from the evil which they might produce. The very mode of expressing them moderates them, and serves as an antidote to their capacity for evil. Prayer and praise, or (in one word) worship, according to St. James, is the Christian remedy for "allaying or carrying off the fever of the mind." In all cases in which the mind is greatly agitated, whether painfully or pleasantly, whether by sorrow, anger, regret, or by joy, pleasure, hope,—the wise thing to do is to take refuge in an act of worship.

Mental excitement is neither right nor wrong, any more than physical hunger or thirst. Everything depends on the method of expressing the one or gratifying the other. It will be easy in both cases to indulge a legitimate craving in such a way as to turn a natural and healthy symptom into a disease. Neither a heated mind nor a heated body can without danger be kept heated, or treated as if they were at their normal temperature. The advice of St. James is that in all cases in which our minds are agitated by strong emotion we should turn to Him who gave us minds capable of feeling such emotion; we should cease to make ourselves our own centre, and turn our thoughts from the causes of our excitement to Him who is the unmoved Cause of all movement and rest.

We need not tie ourselves to the distribution of prayer and praise expressed in the text. It is the most natural and most generally useful distribution; but it is not the only one, and perhaps it is not the highest. The precept will hold good with equal truth if we transpose the two conclusions: "Is any among you suffering? let him sing praise. Is any cheerful?

let him pray." "In *everything* give thanks," says St. Paul; which involves our frequently giving thanks in suffering. This was what Job, to whom St. James has just directed his readers, did in his trouble. He "fell upon the ground and worshipped: and he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (i. 20, 21). And the Psalmist teaches much the same lesson as St. Paul: "I will bless the Lord *at all times;* His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (xxxiv. 1). But if praise is as suitable as prayer for suffering, prayer is as suitable as praise for cheerfulness. He who is cheerful has indeed great reason to bless and praise God. He has a priceless gift, which is a blessing to himself and to all around him, a gift which makes life brighter to the whole circle in which he moves. We most of us take far too little pains to cultivate it, to retain it when it has been granted to us, to regain it when we have lost it or thrown it away. Yet cheerfulness has its dangers. The light-hearted are apt to be light-headed, and to be free from care leads to being free from carefulness. The cheerful may easily lose sobriety, and be found off their guard. The remedy is prayer. Prayer steadies without dimming the bright flame of cheerfulness; and just as thanksgiving sweetens sorrow, so supplication sanctifies joy. "Is any suffering? let him sing praise. Is any cheerful? let him pray."

But there is another advantage in making religious worship, whether public or private, the outlet for our emotions. It secures a real connexion between worship and life. Missionaries tell us that this is a frequent difficulty in their work. It is a hard enough thing to

win converts from heathenism ; but it is perhaps still harder to teach the newly converted that the worship of God has any bearing whatever upon their conduct. This idea is quite strange to them, and utterly alien to their whole mode of thought. They have never been taught anything of the kind before. They have been accustomed to regard the worship of the gods as a series of acts which must be religiously performed in order to win the favour of the deities, or at least to avert their wrath. But it has never occurred to them, nor have their priests impressed upon them, that their lives must be in accordance with their worship, or that the one has any connexion with the other, any more than the colour of their clothes with the amount that they eat and drink. From this it follows that when the idolater has been induced to substitute the worship of God for the worship of idols, there still remains an immense amount to be done. The convert has still to be taught that there can no longer be this divorce of religion from conduct, but that prayer and praise must go hand in hand with work and life.

Converts from heathenism are by no means the only persons who are in need of this lesson. We all of us require to be reminded of it. All of us are apt to draw far too strong a line of distinction between Church and home, between Sunday and week-day, between the time that we spend on our knees and that which we spend in work and recreation. Not, alas! that we are too scrupulous about allowing worldly thoughts to invade sacred times and places, but that we are very jealous about allowing thoughts of God and of His service to mingle with our business and our pleasures, or at least take no pains to bring about and keep up any such mingling. Our worship is often profaned by being

shared with the world; our work is rarely consecrated by being shared with God.

What St. James recommends here is a remedy for this. There can be no wall of partition between conduct and religion if our feelings of joy and sorrow, of elation and despondency, of hope and fear, of love and dislike, are daily and hourly finding expression in praise and prayer. Our emotions will thus become instruments for moving us towards God. So much of life is filled with either vexation or pleasure, that one who has learned to carry out the directions here given of turning suffering into prayer, and cheerfulness into praise, will have gone a long way towards realizing the Apostolic command, "Pray without ceasing." As Calvin well observes, St. James "means that there is no time in which God does not invite us to Himself. For afflictions ought to stimulate us to pray; prosperity supplies us with an occasion to praise God. But such is the perverseness of men, that they cannot rejoice without forgetting God, and when afflicted they are disheartened and driven to despair. We ought, then, to keep within due bounds, so that the joy which usually makes us forget God may induce us to set forth the goodness of God, and that our sorrow may teach us to pray."

The word used by St. James for "to sing praise" (*ψάλλειν*) is worthy of notice. It is the source of the word "psalm." Originally it meant simply to *touch*, especially to *make to vibrate* by touching; whence it came to be used of playing on stringed instruments. Next it came to mean to *sing to the harp;* and finally to sing, whether with or without a stringed accompaniment. This is its signification in the New Testament (Rom. xv. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 15; Eph. v. 19);—to sing

praise to God. St. James, therefore, regards music as a natural and reasonable mode of expressing joyous feelings; and few will care to dispute that it is so; and it is evident that he is thinking chiefly, if not exclusively, of the joyous Christian singing by himself, rather than of his joining in psalms and hymns in the public worship of the congregation. A portion of Hooker's noble vindication of music as a part of religious worship may here with advantage be quoted.

"Touching musical harmony, whether by instrument or by voice, it being but of high and low in sounds a due proportionable disposition, such, notwithstanding, is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have been thereby induced to think that the soul itself, by nature, is or hath in it harmony. A thing which delighteth all ages and beseemeth all states; a thing as seasonable in grief as in joy; as decent being added unto actions of greatest weight and solemnity, as being used when men most sequester themselves from action. The reason hereof is an admirable facility which music hath to express and represent to the mind, more inwardly than any other sensible mean, the very standing, rising, and falling, the very steps and inflexions every way, the turns and varieties of all passions whereunto the mind is subject; yea, so to imitate them that whether it resemble unto us the same state wherein our minds already are, or a clean contrary, we are not more contentedly by the one confirmed, than changed and led away by the other. . . . So that although we lay altogether aside the consideration of ditty or matter, the very harmony of sounds being framed in due sort, and carried from the ear to the spiritual faculties of our souls, is by a native puissance

and efficacy greatly available to bring to a perfect temper whatsoever is there troubled, apt as well to quicken the spirits as to allay that which is too eager, sovereign against melancholy and despair, forcible to draw forth tears of devotion if the mind be such as can yield them, able both to move and to moderate all affections.

"The Prophet David having therefore singular knowledge, not in poetry alone, but in music also, judged them both to be things most necessary for the house of God, left behind him to that purpose a number of Divinely indited poems, and was farther the author of adding unto poetry melody both vocal and instrumental, for the raising up of men's hearts, and the sweetening of their affections towards God. In which considerations the Church of Christ doth likewise at this present day retain it as an ornament to God's service, and an help to our own devotion. They which, under pretence of the Law ceremonial abrogated, require the abrogation of instrumental music, approving nevertheless the use of vocal melody to remain, must show some reason wherefore the one should be thought a legal ceremony, and not the other" (*Eccles. Pol.*, V. xxxviii. 1, 2).

It hardly needs to be stated that it is not necessary to be able to sing in order to observe this precept of St. James. The "singing and making melody with our hearts to the Lord" of which St. Paul writes to the Ephesians (v. 19) is all that is necessary; "giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." The lifting up of the heart is enough, without the lifting up of the voice; and if the voice be lifted up also, it is of little account, either to the soul or to God, whether its

tones be musical, always provided that he who thus offers praise is alone, and not in the congregation. Those who have no music in their voices, and yet persist in joining aloud in the singing of public service, are wanting in charity. In order to gratify themselves, they disturb the devotions of others. And that principle applies to many other things in public worship, especially to details of ritual other than those which are generally observed. There would be much less difficulty about such things if each member of the congregation were to ask, "By doing this, or by refusing to do it, am I likely to distract my neighbours in their worship?" Ought not the answer to that question to be conclusive as regards turning or not turning to the East at the creed, bowing or not bowing the head at the *Gloria Patri*, and the like? We come to church to be calmed, sobered, soothed, not to be fretted and vexed. Let us take care that our own behaviour is such as not to irritate others. By our self-will we may be creating or augmenting mental excitement, which, as St. James tells us, worship, whether public or private, ought to cure.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH. THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK AND EXTREME UNCTION.

"Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him."—St. James v. 14-15.

TWO subjects stand out prominently in this interesting passage—the elders of the Church, and the anointing of the sick. The connexion of the passage with what immediately precedes is close and obvious. After charging his readers in general terms to resort to prayer when they are in trouble, St. James takes a particular and very common instance of trouble, viz. bodily sickness, and gives more detailed directions as to the way in which the man in trouble is to make use of the relief and remedy of prayer. He is not to be content with giving expression to his need in private prayer to God; he is to "call for *the elders of the Church.*"

I. The first thing to be noted in connexion with this sending for the elders of the congregation by the sick man is, that in this Epistle, which is one of the very earliest among the Christian writings which have come down to us, we already find a *distinction made between*

clergy and laity. This distinction runs through the whole of the New Testament. We find it in the earliest writing of all, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, in which the Christians of Thessalonica are exhorted "to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake" (v. 12, 13). And here St. James assumes as a matter of course, that every congregation has elders, that is a constituted ecclesiastical government. Compare with these the precept in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account" (xiii. 17); and the frequent directions in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. iii. 1-13; iv. 6, 13, 14; v. 17, 19, 22; Tit. i. 5-9; ii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 6, 14; ii. 2; iv. 5). What the precise functions of the clergy were is not told us with much detail or precision; but it is quite clear, from the passage before us, and those which have been quoted above, that whatever the functions were, they were spiritual rather than secular, and were duties which a select minority had to exercise in reference to the rest; they were not such as any one might exercise towards any one. In the present case the sick person is not to send for any members of the congregation, but for certain who hold a definite, and apparently an official position. If *any* Christians could discharge the function in question, St. James would not have given the sick person the trouble of summoning the elders rather than those people who chanced to be near at hand. And it is quite clear that not all Christians are over all other Christians in the Lord; that not all are to rule, and all to obey and submit; therefore not all have the same authority to

"admonish" others, or to "watch in behalf of their souls, as they that shall give account."[1]

The reason why the elders are to be summoned is stated in different ways by different writers, but with a large amount of substantial agreement. "As being those in whom the power and grace of the Holy Spirit more particularly appeared," says Calvin. "Because when they pray it is not much less than if the whole Church prayed," says Bengel. St. James, says Neander, "regards the presbyters in the light of organs of the Church, acting in its name;" and, "As the presbyters acted in the name of the whole Church, and each one as a member of the body felt that he needed its sympathy and intercession, and might count upon it; individuals should therefore, in cases of sickness, send for the presbyters of the Church. These were to offer prayer on their behalf." The intercession which St. James recommends, says Stier, is "intercession for the sick on the part of the representatives of the Church, . . . not merely the intercession of friends or brethren as such, but in the name of the whole community, one of whose members is suffering." It is altogether beside the mark to suggest that the elders were summoned as people of the greatest experience, who perhaps also were specially *skilled in medicine*. Of that there is not only no hint, but the context excludes the idea. If that were in the writer's mind, why does he not say at once, "Let him call for the physicians"? If the healing art is to be thought of at all in connexion with the passage, the case is one in which medicine has already done all that it can, or in which it can do nothing at all. St.

[1] The question of the Origin of the Christian Ministry has been discussed in another volume of this series. See the *Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 104-117 (Hodder and Stoughton, 1888).

James would doubtless approve the advice given by the son of Sirach: "My son, in thy sickness be not negligent; but pray unto the Lord, and He will make thee whole" (Ecclus. xxxviii. 9). This exactly agrees with the precept, "Is any among you suffering? let him pray." "Then give place to the physician, for the Lord hath created him: let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him. There is a time when in their hands there is good success" (12, 13). To this there is no equivalent in St. James; but he says nothing that is inconsistent with it. Then, after the physician has done his part, and perhaps in vain, would come the summoning of the elders to offer prayer. But it is simpler to suppose that the physician's part is left out of the account altogether.

II. The second point of interest is the anointing of the sick person by the elders. That what is said here affords no Scriptural authority for the Roman rite of Extreme Unction, is one of the commonplaces of criticism. One single fact is quite conclusive. The object of the unction prescribed by St. James is the recovery of the sick person; whereas Extreme Unction, as its name implies, is never administered until the sick person's recovery is considered to be almost or quite hopeless, and death imminent; the possibility of bodily healing is not entirely excluded, but it is not the main purpose of the rite. The only other passage in the New Testament in which the unction of the sick is mentioned is equally at variance with the Roman rite. We are told by St. Mark that the Twelve, when sent out by Christ two and two, "anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (vi. 13). Here also recovery, and not preparation for death, was the purpose of the anointing, which the Apostles seem to have

practised on their own responsibility, for it is not mentioned in the charge which Christ gave them when He sent them out (7-11).

But there is this amount of connexion between these two passages of Scripture and the Roman sacrament of Extreme Unction, viz. that the latter *grew out of ecclesiastical practices which were based upon these passages.* As in not a few other instances, development has brought about a state of things which is inconsistent with the original starting-point. But in order to understand the development we must understand the starting-point, and that requires us to find an answer to the question, What purpose was the oil intended to serve? Was it purely symbolical? and if so, of what? Was it merely for the refreshment of the sick person, giving relief to parched skin and stiffened limbs? Was it medicinal, with a view to a permanent cure by natural means? Was it the channel or instrument of a supernatural cure? Was it an aid to the sick person's faith? One or both of the last two suggestions may be accepted as the most probable solution. And the reason why oil was selected as a channel of Divine power and an aid to faith was, that it was believed to have healing properties. It is easier to believe when visible means are used than when nothing is visible, and it is still easier to believe when the visible means appear to be likely to contribute to the desired effect. Christ twice used spittle in curing blindness, probably because spittle was believed to be beneficial to the eyesight. And that oil was supposed to be efficacious as medicine is plain from numerous passages both in and outside of Holy Scripture. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and festering sores: they

have not been closed, nor bound up, neither mollified with oil" (Isa. i. 6). The Good Samaritan poured wine and oil into the wounds of the man who fell among robbers (Luke x. 34). A mixture of oil and wine was used for the malady which attacked the army of Ælius Gallus, and was applied both externally and internally (Dion Cass. LIII. 29; Strabo XVI., p. 780). His physicians caused Herod the Great to be bathed in a vessel full of oil when he was supposed to be at death's door (Josephus, *Ant.* XVII. vi. 5). Celsus recommends rubbing with oil in the case of fevers and some other ailments (*De Med.* II. 14, 17; III. 6, 9, 19, 22; IV. 2).[1] But it is obvious that St. James does not recommend the oil merely as medicine, for he does not say that the oil shall cure the sick person, nor yet that the oil with prayer shall do so; but that "the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick," without mentioning the oil at all. On the other hand, he says that the anointing is to be done by the elders "in the name of the Lord." If the anointing were merely medicinal, it might have been performed by any one, without waiting for the elders. And it can hardly be supposed that oil was believed to be a remedy for all diseases.

On the other hand, it seems to be too much to say that the anointing had nothing to do with bodily healing at all, and was simply a means of grace for the sick. Thus Döllinger says, "This is no gift of healing, for that was not confined to the presbyters; and for that Christ prescribed not unction, but laying on of hands. Had he meant that, St. James would have bidden or advised the sick to send for one who possessed this

[1] For additional evidence see J. C. Wolf, *Curæ Philol. et Crit.* V., pp. 79-81; Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebr.* II., pp. 304, 444, on Matt. vi. 17 and Mark vi. 13; Launoi, *De Sacramento Unctionis Infirmorum*, I., p. 444.

gift, whether presbyter or layman. . . . What was to be conveyed by this medium was, therefore, only sometimes recovery or relief, always consolation, revival of confidence and forgiveness of sins, on condition, of course, of faith and repentance" (*First Age of the Church*, p. 235, Oxenham's translation, 2nd ed.: Allen, 1867). But although the gift of healing was not confined to the elders, yet in certain cases they may have exercised it; and although Christ prescribed the laying on of hands (Mark xvi. 18), yet the Apostles sometimes healed by anointing with oil (Mark vi. 13). And that "shall *save* him that is sick" (*σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα*) means "shall *cure* him," is clear both from the context, and also from the use of the same word elsewhere. "Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath *saved* thee," to the woman with the issue of blood (Matt. ix. 22). Jairus prays, "Come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be *saved*" (Mark v. 23). The disciples say of Lazarus, "Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will be *saved*" (John xi. 12). And "the Lord shall raise him up" makes this interpretation still more certain. The same expression is used of Simon's wife's mother (Mark i. 31). "The Lord" is Christ, not the Father, both here and "in the Name of *the Lord*." Thus St. Peter says to Æneas, "*Jesus Christ* healeth thee" (Acts ix. 34. Comp. iii. 6, 16; v. 10).

That St. James makes the promise of recovery without any restriction may at first sight appear to be surprising; but in this he is only following the example of our Lord, who makes similar promises, and leaves it to the thought and experience of Christians to find out the limitations to them. St. James is only applying to a particular case what Christ promised in general terms. "All things, whatsoever ye pray and ask for,

believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24. Comp. Matt. xvii. 20). "If ye shall ask [Me] anything in My Name, I will do it" (John xiv. 14). "If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in My Name" (John xvi. 23). The words "in My Name" point to the limitation; they do not, of course, refer to the use of the formula "through Jesus Christ our Lord," but to the exercise of the spirit of Christ: "Not My will, but Thine be done." The union of our will with the will of God is the very first condition of successful prayer. The Apostles themselves had no indiscriminate power of healing. St. Paul did not heal Epaphroditus, much as he yearned for his recovery (Phil. ii. 27). He left Trophimus at Miletus sick (2 Tim. iv. 20). He did not cure his own thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. xii. 7-9). How, then, can we suppose that St. James credited the elders of every congregation with an unrestricted power of healing? He leaves it to the common sense and Christian submission of his readers to understand that the elders have no power to cancel the sentence of death pronounced on the whole human race. To pray that any one should be exempt from this sentence would be not faith, but presumption.

Of the employment of the rite here prescribed by St. James we have very little evidence in the early ages of the Church. Tertullian mentions a cure by anointing, but it is not quite a case in point. The Emperor Septimius Severus believed that he had been cured from an illness through oil administered by a Christian named Proculus Torpacion, steward of Evodias, and in gratitude for it he maintained him in the palace for the rest of his life (*Ad. Scap.* iv.). Origen, in the second Homily on Leviticus (iv.), quotes the passage

from St. James, and seems to understand the sickness to be that of sin. He interpolates thus: "Let him call for the elders of the Church, and *let them lay their hands on him*, anointing him with oil," etc. This perhaps tells us how the rite was administered in Alexandria in his time; or it may mean that Origen understood the "pray *over* him" (ἐπ' αὐτόν) of St. James to signify imposition of hands. With him, then, the forgiveness of sins is the healing. A century and a half later Chrysostom takes a further step, and employs the passage to show that priests have the power of absolution. "For not only at the time when they regenerate us, but afterwards also, they have authority to forgive sins." And then he quotes James v. 14, 15 (*De Sacerd.* III. 6). It is evident that this is quite alien to the passage. The sickness and the sins are plainly distinguished by St. James, and nothing is said about absolution by the elders, who pray for his recovery, and (no doubt) for his forgiveness.

When we reach the sixth century the evidence for the custom of anointing the sick with holy oil becomes abundant. At first any one with a reputation for sanctity might bless the oil—not only laymen, but women. But in the West the rule gradually spread from Rome that the sacred oil for the sick must be "made" by the bishop. In the East this has never been observed. Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, says that according to the Greeks it is lawful for presbyters to make the chrism for the sick. And this rule continues to this day. One priest suffices; but it is desirable to get seven, if possible.

But the chief step in the development is taken when not only the blessing of the oil, but the administering of it to the sick, is reserved to the clergy. In Bede's time

this restriction was not yet made, as is clear from his comments on the passage, although even then it was customary for priests to administer the unction. But by the tenth century this restriction had probably become general. It became connected with the communion of the sick, which of course required a priest, and then with the *Viaticum*, or communion of the dying; but even then the unction seems to have preceded the last communion. The name "Extreme Unction" (*unctio extrema*), as a technical ecclesiastical term, is not older than the twelfth century. Other terms are "Last Oil" (*ultimum oleum*) and "Sacrament of the Departing" (*sacramentum exeuntium*). But when we have reached these phrases we are very far indeed from the ordinance prescribed by St. James, and from that which was practised by the Apostles. Jeremy Taylor, in the dedication of the *Holy Dying*, says fairly enough, "The fathers of the Council of Trent first disputed, and after their manner at last agreed, that Extreme Unction was instituted by Christ; but afterwards being admonished by one of their theologues that the Apostles ministered unction to infirm people before they were priests, for fear that it should be thought that this unction might be administered by him that was no priest, they blotted out the word 'instituted,' and put in its stead 'insinuated' this sacrament, and that it was published by St. James. So it is in their doctrine; and yet in their anathematisms they curse all them that shall deny it to have been instituted by Christ. I shall lay no prejudice against it, but add this only, that there being but two places of Scripture pretended for this ceremony, some chief men of their own side have proclaimed these two invalid as to the institution of it;" and he mentions in particular Suarez and Cajetan. But he states more

than he can know when he declares of Extreme Unction that "since it is used when the man is above half dead, when he can exercise no act of understanding, it must needs be nothing." Those who receive the rite are not always unconscious; and is it certain that an unconscious person "can exercise no act of the understanding," or that prayer for one who can exercise no act of the understanding "must needs be nothing"? With similar want of caution Stier speaks of "the *superstition* which sends for the minister to 'pray over the sick,' when these have scarce any consciousness left." Whether or no Extreme Unction is an edifying ceremony is a question worthy of argument, and nothing is here urged on either side; but we are going beyond our knowledge if we assert that it *can* have no effect on the dying man; and we are unduly limiting the power of prayer if we affirm that to pray for one who has lost consciousness is a useless superstition. All that is contended for here is, that the Roman rite is something very different from that which is ordered by St. James.[1]

[1] See letters in the *Guardian* of Mar. 12, 19, Apr. 9, 16, 23, May 7, 1890; pp. 447, 481, 594, 633, 682, 763.

In the Visitation of the Sick in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI. there is provision for the older rite: "If the sicke person desyre to be annoynted, then shall the priest annoynte him upon the forehead or breast only, making the signe of the crosse, saying thus, As with this visible oyle thy body outwardly is annoynted: so our heavenly father almyghtye God graunt of his infinite goodnesse, that thy soule inwardly may be annoynted with the holy gost, who is the spirite of al strength, comforte, reliefe, and gladnesse. And vouchsafe for his great mercy (yf it be his blessed will) to restore unto thee thy bodely helth and strength, to serve him," etc.

Readers of the *Confessions* will remember how St. Augustine on one occasion asked his friends to pray that he might be freed from great pain, and forthwith found relief. "I have neither forgotten nor will be silent about the severity of Thy scourge, and the marvellous speed

"And if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him." We ought perhaps rather to translate, "*Even* if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him." (The Greek is not *καὶ ἐάν* or *ἐὰν δέ*, but *κἄν*, for which comp. John viii. 14; x. 38; xi. 25). The meaning would seem to be, "even if his sickness has been produced by his sins, his sin shall be forgiven, and his sickness cured." It is possible, but unnatural, to join the first clause of this sentence with the preceding one: "the Lord shall raise him up, even if he have committed sins." In that case "It shall be forgiven him" forms a very awkward independent sentence, without conjunction. The ordinary arrangement of the clauses is much better: even if the malady is the effect of the man's own wrong-doing, the prayer offered by faith—his faith, and that of the elders—shall still prevail. St. Paul tells the Corinthians that their misconduct respecting the Lord's Supper had caused much sickness among them, and not a few deaths (1 Cor. xi. 30); and such direct punishments of sin were not confined to the Corinthian Church nor to the Apostolic age. They still occur in abundance, and those who experience them have the assurance of Scripture that if they repent and pray in faith their sins will certainly be forgiven, and their punishment possibly removed.

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of Thy mercy. Thou didst then torture me with toothache (he says elsewhere that this was so grievous that he could learn nothing fresh, but could only think of what he already knew), and when the pain became so severe that I was unable to speak the thought rose in my heart to urge all my friends who were present to pray for me to Thee, the God of all health. And I wrote this on a waxen tablet, and gave it to them to read. Presently, as with suppliant desire we bowed our knees, that great pain fled away. But what pain? and how did it flee? I confess, my Lord and my God, that it frightened me; for from my earliest days had experienced nothing like it" (IX. iv. 12).

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONFESSION OF SINS. THE LAWFULNESS OF PRAYERS FOR RAIN.

"Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."—St. James v. 16-18.

THE connexion of this passage with the preceding one is very close. This is evident even in the Authorized Version; but it is made still more manifest by the Revisers, who have restored the connecting "therefore" to the text upon overwhelming authority. St. James is passing from the particular case of the sick person to something more general, viz. mutual confession of sins. If we draw out his thought in full, it will be something of this kind: "Even if the sick person be suffering the consequences of his sins, nevertheless the faith and prayers of the elders, combined with his own, shall prevail for his forgiveness and healing. Of course he must confess and bewail his sins: if he does not admit them and repent of them, he can hope for nothing. *Therefore* you ought all of you habitually to confess your sins to one another, and to intercede for one another, in order that

when sickness comes upon you, you may the more readily be healed." It is not quite certain that the word rendered "ye may be healed" (ἰαθῆτε) ought to be limited to bodily healing; but the context seems to imply that the cure of bodily disorders is still in the mind of St. James. If, however, with various commentators, we take it to mean "that your *souls* may be healed," then there is no need to supply any such thought as "when sickness comes upon you."

It might surprise us to find that the practice of auricular confession to a priest is deduced from the precept, "Confess your sins one to another," if we had not the previous experience of finding the rite of Extreme Unction deduced from the precept respecting the anointing of the sick. But here also Cajetan has the credit of admitting that no Scriptural authority for the Roman practice can be found in the words of St. James. The all-important "to one another" (ἀλλήλοις) is quite fatal to the interpretation of confession to a priest. If the confession of a layman to a priest is meant, then the confession of a priest to a layman is *equally meant:* the words, whether in the Greek or in the English, cannot be otherwise understood. But the injunction is evidently quite general, and the distinction between clergy and laity does not enter into it at all: each Christian, whether elder or layman, is to confess to other Christians, whether elders or laymen, either to one or to many, as the case may be. When the sick person just spoken of confessed his sins, he confessed them to the elders of the Church, because they were present; they did not come to receive his confession, but to pray for him and to anoint him. He sent for them, not because he wished to confess to them, but because he was sick. Even if he had had nothing to

confess to them—a case evidently contemplated by St. James as not only possible, but common—he would still have sent for them. So far from its being among their functions as elders to hear the sick man's confession, St. James seems rather to imply that he ought to have made it previously to others. If Christians habitually confess their sins to one another, there will be no special confession required when any of them falls ill. But granting that this interpretation of his brief directions is not quite certain, it is quite certain that what he commends is the confession of any Christian to any Christian, and not the confession of laity to presbyters. About that he says nothing, either one way or the other, for it is not in his mind. He neither sanctions nor forbids it, but he gives a direction which shows that as regards the duty of confession to man, the normal condition of things is for any Christian to confess to any Christian. The important point is that the sinner should not keep his guilty secret locked up in his own bosom; to whom he should tell it is left to his own discretion. As Tertullian says, in his treatise *On Penance*, "Confession of sins lightens as much as concealment (*dissimulatio*) aggravates them. For confession is prompted by the desire to make amends; concealment is prompted by contumacy" (viii.). Similarly Origen, on Psalm xxxvii.: "See, therefore, what the Divine Scripture teaches us, that we must not conceal sin within us. For just as, it may be, people who have undigested food detained inside them, or are otherwise grievously oppressed internally, if they vomit, obtain relief, so they also who have sinned, if they conceal and retain the sin, are oppressed inwardly. But if the sinner becomes his own accuser, accuses himself and confesses, he at the

same time vomits out both the sin and the whole cause of his malady" (*Homil.* II. 6). In much the same strain Chrysostom writes, "Sin, if it is confessed, becomes less; but if it is not confessed, worse; for if the sinner adds shamelessness and obstinacy to his sin, he will never stop. How, indeed, will such a one be at all able to guard himself from falling again into the same sins, if in the earlier case he was not conscious that he sinned. . . . Let us not merely call ourselves sinners, but let us make a reckoning of our sins, counting them according to their kind, one by one. . . . If thou art of the persuasion that thou art a sinner, this is not able so much to humble thy soul as the very catalogue of thy sins examined into according to their kind" (*Homil.* xxx. *in Ep. ad. Hebr.*)

All these writers have this main point in common, that a sinner who does not confess what he has done amiss is likely to become careless and hardened. And the principle is at least as old as the Book of Proverbs: "He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy" (xxviii. 13). But, as the context clearly shows in each case, they are each of them writing of a different kind of confession. The confession (*exomologesis*) which Tertullian so urgently recommends is public confession before the congregation; that which Origen advises is private confession to an individual, particularly with a view to deciding whether public confession is expedient. What Chrysostom prefers, both here and elsewhere in his writings, is secret confession to God: "I say not to thee, Make a parade of thyself; nor yet, Accuse thyself in the presence of the others. . . . Before God confess these things; before the Judge ever confess thy sins, praying, if not

with the tongue, at any rate with the heart, and in this way ask for mercy." All which is in accordance with the principle laid down by St. John, "If we confess our sins"—our sins in detail, not the mere fact that we have sinned—"He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). Bellarmine has the courage to claim not only St. James, but St. John, as teaching confession to a priest (*De Pœnit.* III. iv.); but it is manifest that St. John is speaking of confession to God, without either approving or condemning confession to man, and that St. James is speaking of the latter, without saying anything about the former. But just as St. James leaves to the penitent's discretion the question to whom he shall confess, whether to clergy or laity, so also he leaves it to his discretion whether he shall confess to one or to many, and whether in private or in public.[1] In the second, third, and fourth centuries public confession was commonly part of public penance. And the object of it is well stated by Hooker: "Offenders in secret" were "persuaded that if the Church did direct them in the offices of their penitency, and assist them with public prayer, they should more easily obtain that they sought than by trusting wholly to their own endeavours." The primitive view, he holds, was this: "Public confession they thought necessary by way of *discipline*, not private confession as in the nature of a *sacrament*" (*Eccl. Pol.*, VI. iv. 2, 6). But experience soon showed that indiscriminate public confession of

[1] In the *Dict. of Chr. Biogr.*, I., p. 615, Tertullian's account of public confession is given at some length, and then the question is asked, "Is not this, clearly, the *exomologesis* which St. James enjoins?" To this one replies that St. James enjoins confession, but says nothing about publicity.

grievous sins was very mischievous. Therefore in the East, and (if Sozomen is correct) at Rome also, penitentiary presbyters were appointed to decide for penitents whether their sins must be confessed to the congregation or not. Thus, what Origen advises each penitent to do for himself, viz. seek a wise adviser respecting the expediency of public confession and penance, was formally done for every one. But in A.D. 391, Nectarius, the predecessor of Chrysostom in the see of Constantinople, was persuaded to abolish the office, *apparently* because a penitentiary presbyter had sanctioned public confession in a case which caused great scandal; but neither Socrates (V. xix.) nor Sozomen (VII. xvi.) makes this point very clear. The consequence of the abolition was that each person was left to his own discretion, and public penance fell into disuse.

But public confession had other disadvantages. Private enmity made use of these confessions to annoy, and even to prosecute the penitent. Moreover, the clergy sometimes proclaimed to the congregation what had been told them in confidence; that is, they made public confession on behalf of the sinner without his consent. Whereupon Leo the Great, in a letter to the Bishops of Apulia and Campania, March 6th, A.D. 459, sanctioned the practice of private confession (*Ep.* clxviii. [cxxxvi.]). Thus, in the West, as previously in the East, a severe blow was given to the practice of public confession and penance.

But it is probable that the origin, or at least the chief encouragement, of the practice of auricular confession is rather to be looked for in *monasticism*. Offences against the rule of the Order had to be confessed before the whole community; and it was

assumed that the only other grave offences likely to happen in the monastic life would be those of thought. These had to be confessed in private to the abbat. The influences of monasticism were by no means bounded by the monastery walls; and it is probable that the rule of private confession by the brethren to the abbat had much to do with the custom of private confession by the laity to the priest. But it is carefully to be noted that for a considerable period the chief considerations are the penitent's admission of his sins and the fixing of the penance. Only gradually does the further idea of the absolution of the penitent by the body or the individual that hears the confession come in; and at last it becomes the main idea. Confession once a year to a priest was made compulsory by the Lateran Council in 1215; but various local synods had made similar regulations at earlier periods, *e.g.* the Council of Toulouse in 1129, and of Liège in 710.[1] But when we have reached these regulations we have once more advanced very far indeed beyond what is prescribed by St. James in this Epistle.

There cannot be much doubt what is the main idea with St. James: "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and *pray* one for another, that ye may be healed. The *supplication* of a righteous man availeth much in its working. Elijah . . . *prayed fervently*. . . . And he *prayed again*," etc. It is in order that we may *induce others to pray for us* that we are to confess our sins to them; and this is the great motive which

[1] The Council of Trent anathematizes any one "who denies that sacramental confession was instituted of Divine right, or that it is necessary to salvation, or who says that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, *which the Church has ever observed from the beginning*, and doth observe, is alien from the institution and command of Christ, and is a human invention" (Canon VI. ii. 165).

underlies the public confession of the primitive Church. As Hooker well expresses it, "The greatest thing which made men forward and willing upon their knees to confess whatever they had committed against God . . . was their fervent desire to be helped and assisted with the prayers of God's saints." And the meaning of these prayers is strikingly expressed by Tertullian, who thus addresses the penitent in need of such intercession: "Where one and two meet, there is a Church; and a Church is Christ. Therefore, when thou dost stretch forth thy hands to the knees of thy brethren, it is Christ that thou touchest, Christ on whom thou prevailest. Just so, when *they* shed tears over *thee*, it is Christ who feels compassion, Christ who is entreating the Father. Readily doth He ever grant that which the Son requests" (*De Pœnit.* x.). To unburden his own heart was one benefit of the penitent's confession; to obtain the intercession of others for his forgiveness and recovery was another; and the latter was the chief reason for confessing to man; confession to God might effect the other. The primitive forms of absolution, when confession was made to a priest, were precatory rather than declaratory. "May the Lord absolve thee" (*Dominus absolvat*) was changed in the West to "I absolve thee," in the twelfth century. From the Sarum Office the latter formula passed into the First Prayer Book of Edward VI., in the Visitation of the Sick, and has remained there unchanged; but in 1552 the concluding words of the preceding rubric, "and the same forme of absolucion shalbe used in all pryvate confessions," were omitted.[1] In the Greek

[1] Moreover, "shall absolve hym after this *forme*" was changed to "shall absolve hym after thys *sorte*," as if allowing another form in the Visitation of the Sick.

Church the form of absolution after private confession is precatory :—

"O my spiritual child, who dost confess to my humility, *I, a humble sinner, have no power on earth to remit sins. This God alone can do.* Yet by reason of that Divine charge which was committed to the Apostles after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the words, Whose soever sins ye forgive, etc., and by that encouraged, *we* say, Whatsoever thou hast confessed to my most lowly humility, and whatsoever thou hast omitted to confess, either through ignorance or any forgetfulness, *may God forgive thee*, both in this world and in that which is to come." And this is followed by a prayer very similar to the absolution: "God . . . forgive thee, by the ministry of me a sinner, all thy sins, both in this world and in that which is to come, and present thee blameless at His dread tribunal. Go in peace, and think no more of the faults which thou hast confessed." The "*we* say" holds fast to the doctrine that it is to the Church as a whole, and not to Peter or any individual minister, that the words, "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them" (John xx. 23), were spoken.

"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." "The effectual earnest prayer" of the Authorized Version cannot be justified: either "effectual" or "earnest" must be struck out, as there is only one word (*ἐνεργουμένη*) in the original; moreover, the word for "prayer" is not the same as before (*δέησις*, not *εὐχή*). But it may be doubted whether "earnest" is not better than "in its working." Perhaps "in its earnestness" would be better than either: "Great is the strength of a righteous man's supplication, in its earnestness."

The example by which St. James proves the efficacy of a righteous man's prayer is interesting and important in two respects:—

1. It is the only evidence that we have that the great drought in the time of Ahab was prayed for by Elijah, and it is the only direct evidence that he prayed for the rain which put an end to it. We are told that Elijah *prophesied* the drought (1 Kings xvii. 1) and the rain (1 Kings xviii. 41); and that before the rain he put himself in an attitude of prayer, with his face between his knees (ver. 42); but that he prayed, and for the rain which he had foretold, is not stated. Whether the statement made by St. James is an inference from these statements, or based on independent tradition, must remain uncertain. We read in Ecclesiasticus of Elijah that by "the word of the Lord he shut up (held back) the heaven" (xlviii. 3); but that seems to refer to prophecy rather than to prayer. The difference, if there be any, between the duration of the drought as stated here and by St. Luke (iv. 25), and as stated in the Book of the Kings, will not be a stumbling-block to any who recognize that inspiration does not necessarily make a man infallible in chronology. Three and a half years (=42 months=1,260 days) was the traditional duration of times of great calamity (Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7; Rev. xi. 2, 3; xii. 6, 14; xiii. 5).

2. This passage supplies us with *Biblical authority for prayers for changes of weather*, and the like; for the conduct of Elijah is evidently put before us for our imitation. St. James carefully guards against the objection that Elijah was a man gifted with miraculous powers, and therefore no guide for ordinary people, by asserting that he was a man of like nature (ὁμοιοπαθής)

with ourselves. And let us concede, for the sake of argument, that St. James may have been mistaken in believing that Elijah prayed for the drought and for the rain; yet still the fact remains that an inspired New Testament writer puts before us, for our encouragement in prayer, a case in which prayers for changes of weather were made and answered. And he certainly exhorts us to pray for the recovery of the sick, which is an analogous case. This kind of prayer seems to require special consideration.

"Is it, then, according to the Divine will that when we are individually suffering from the regularity of the course of nature—suffering, for instance, from the want of rain, or the superabundance of it—we should ask God to interfere with that regularity? That in such circumstances we should pray for submission to the Divine will, and for such wisdom as shall lead to compliance with it in the future, is a matter of course, and results inevitably from the relation between the spiritual Father and the spiritual child. But ought we to go farther than this? Ought we to pray, expecting that our prayer will be effectual, that God may interfere with the fixed sequences of nature? Let us try to realize what would follow if we offered such prayer and prevailed. In a world-wide Church each believer would constitute himself a judge of what was best for himself and his neighbour, and thus the order of the world would be at the mercy everywhere of individual caprice and ignorance. Irregularity would accordingly take the place of invariableness. No man could possibly foretell what would be on the morrow. The scientist would find all his researches for rule and law baffled; the agriculturist would find all his calculations upset; nature, again, as in the days of ignorance

would become the master of man; like an eagle transfixed by an arrow winged by one of its own feathers, man would have shackled himself with the chains of his ancient servitude by the licentious employment of his own freedom, and would have reduced the cosmos of which God made him the master to a chaos which overwhelmed him by its unexpected blows" (the Bishop of Manchester, September 4th, 1887, in Manchester Cathedral, during a meeting of the British Association).

The picture which is here drawn sketches for us the consequences of allowing each individual to have control over the forces of nature. It is incredible that God could be induced to allow such control to individuals; but does it follow from this that He never listens to prayers respecting *His* direction of the forces of nature, and that consequently all such prayers are presumptuous? The conclusion does not seem to follow from the premises. The valid conclusion would rather be this: No one ought to pray to God to give him absolute control of the forces of nature. The prayer, "Lord, in *Thy* control of the forces of nature have mercy upon me and my fellow men," is a prayer of a very different character.

The objection to prayers for rain, or for the cessation of rain, and the like, is based on the supposition that we thereby "ask God to interfere with the regularity of the course of nature." Yet it is admitted that to "pray for submission to the Divine will, and for such wisdom as shall lead to compliance with it in the future, is a matter of *course*, and results *inevitably* from the relation between the spiritual Father and the spiritual child." But is there no regularity about the things thus admitted to be fit objects of prayer? Are human

character and human intellect not subject to law? When we pray for a submissive spirit and for wisdom, are we not asking God to "interfere with that regularity" which governs the development of character and of intelligence? Either the prayer is to obtain more submission and more wisdom than we should otherwise get, or it is not. If it is to obtain it, then the regularity which would otherwise have prevailed is interrupted. If our prayer is not to obtain for us more submission and more wisdom than we should have obtained if we had not prayed, then the prayer is futile.

It will perhaps be urged that the two cases are not strictly parallel. They are not; but for the purposes of this argument they are sufficiently parallel. It is maintained that we have no right to pray for rain, because we thereby propose to interfere with the regularity of natural processes; yet it is allowed that we may pray for wisdom. To get wisdom by prayer is quite as much an interference with the regularity of natural processes as to get rain by prayer. Therefore, either we ought to pray for neither, or we have the right to pray for both. And so far as the two cases are not parallel, it seems to be more reasonable to pray for rain than to pray for submissiveness and wisdom. God has given our wills the awful power of being able to resist His will. Are we to suppose that He exercises less control over matter, which cannot resist Him, than over human wills, which He allows to do so; or that He will help us or not help us to become better and wiser, according as we ask Him or do not ask Him for such help, and yet will never make any change as to giving or withholding material blessings, however much, or however little, we may ask Him to do this?

The objection is sometimes stated in a slightly

different form. God has arranged the material universe according to His infinite wisdom; it is presumptuous to pray that He will make any change in it. The answer to which is, that if that argument is valid against praying for rain, it is valid against all prayer whatever. If I impugn infinite wisdom when I pray for a change in the weather, do I not equally impugn it, when I pray for a change in the life or character o myself or of my friends? God knows without our asking what weather is best for us; and He knows equally without our asking what spiritual graces are best for us.

Does not the parallel difficulty point to a parallel solution? What right have we to assume that in either case effectual prayer interferes with the regularity which seems to characterize Divine action? May it not be God's will that the prayer of faith should be a force that can influence other forces, whether material or spiritual, and that its influence should be according to *law* (whether natural or supernatural) quite as much as the influence of other forces? A man who puts up a lightning-conductor brings down the electric current when it might otherwise have remained above, and brings it down in one place rather than another; yet no one would say that he interferes with the regularity of the course of nature. Is there anything in religion or science to forbid us from thinking of prayer as working in an analogous manner—according to a law too subtle for us to comprehend and analyse, but according to a law none the less? In the vast network of forces in which an all-wise God has constructed the universe a Christian will believe that one force which "availeth much," both in the material and in the spiritual world, is the earnest prayer of the

righteous. It is better for us that we should be able to influence by our prayers God's direction of events than that we should be unable to do so; therefore a merciful Father has placed this power within our reach.[1]

[1] Dean Plumptre has pointed out an "interesting coincidence" between this mention of Elijah and the account given by Josephus of Caligula's mad attempt to set up his statue in the Temple. P. Petronius Turpilianus had been appointed Governor of Syria in the room of Vitellius, and was commissioned to erect the statue; but he was much impressed by the earnestness of the Jews in opposing the proposed outrage, and promised large multitudes of them at Tiberias that he would do all in his power to induce Caligula to desist. It was a year of great drought, no rain falling even when the sky was overcast; but on this day, although there had been no previous signs of it, abundance of rain fell directly Petronius had finished his speech to the Jews. Josephus speaks of this as God showing His presence (*παρουσία*) to Petronius, and says that Petronius recognized it as a Divine manifestation (*ἐπιφάνεια*) of God's care of the Jews. Dr. Plumptre says that the people—"Christians, we may believe, as well as Jews"—had been praying for rain, and that Petronius regarded the rain "partly as an answer to the prayers of the people;" which may have been so, but *it is not so stated by Josephus*. "According to the date which, on independent grounds, has here been assigned to St. James's Epistle, the event referred to must have happened but a *few months* before, or but a *few months* after it. If before, he may well have had it in his thoughts; if after, it may well have been in part the effect of his teaching." Dr. Plumptre thinks that the Epistle was written between A.D. 44 and 51. The events recorded by Josephus took place A.D. 39. Caligula was assassinated January 24th, A.D. 41. The coincidence, therefore, breaks down upon examination. (1) The unexpected rain is represented, not as an answer to prayer, but as a sign of God's approval of the decision of Petronius. (2) Even if we place the Epistle as early as A.D. 45, it was written *six years* after the sudden rain at Tiberias; and St. James did not need that occurrence (of which he had possibly never heard) in order to be reminded of the drought and the rain prophesied by Elijah.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE WORK OF CONVERTING SINNERS; ITS CONDITIONS AND REWARDS.

"My brethren, if any among you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins."—St. James v. 19, 20.

ST. JAMES has just been speaking of the case of a man who is sick, and needs the prayers of others for his healing, both in body and soul; for it may be that the sick man has sins to be repented of as well as ailments to be cured. This leads naturally enough to the common case of those who, whether sick in body or not, feel their consciences burdened by sin. They are to make known their trouble to one or more of the brethren, in order that efficacious prayers may be offered to God on their behalf. But these cases do not by any means cover the whole ground. Besides those who feel and make known their bodily sickness, and those who feel and make known their spiritual sickness, in order that their fellow Christians may pray to God for their healing, there is the common case of those who either do not feel, or if they feel do not confess, that their souls are sick unto death. There are many who have left the path of life, and are going steadily, and perhaps rapidly, to destruction, who are

ignorant of their piteous condition; and there are others who are aware of their peril, but are either too hardened to desire any serious change, or too proud to own their condition to others and ask their help towards recovery. Are such unhappy persons to be left to themselves, and allowed to go on their way to perdition, for want of the aid which they are too insensate or to haughty to ask?

Certainly not, says the writer of this Epistle. The reclaiming of such sinners is one of the noblest tasks which a Christian can undertake; and the successful accomplishment of it is fraught with incalculable blessings, the thought of which ought to move us to undertake such work. To save one immortal soul from eternal death is worth the labour of a lifetime. If to lead one soul astray is to share the devil's work and incur guilt to which a violent death would be preferable (Matt. xviii. 6; Mark ix. 42; Luke xvii. 2), to lead one soul back from death is to share Christ's work (2 Cor. vi. 1) by blotting out from God's sight the sins which cry for punishment.

We shall obtain a clearer view of the meaning of St. James in these concluding verses of his Epistle if we begin with the last words of the passage, and from them work back to what precedes.

"Shall cover a multitude of sins." Whose sins? Not the sins of him who converts the erring brother. This view, which is perhaps the one which most readily occurs to those who merely listen to the passage as it is read in church, but have never studied it, may safely be rejected, although it has the sanction of Erasmus and to some extent also of the Venerable Bede. There are two reasons, each of which would suffice to condemn this explanation, and which taken together are

almost unanswerable. (1) Nowhere else in Scripture do we find any such doctrine, that a man may cover his own sins by inducing another sinner to repent. On the contrary, it is one of the terrible possibilities which attend the work of the ministry that a man may preach successfully to others, and yet himself be a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27), and may move many hearts, while his own remains as hard as the nether millstone. It is altogether misleading to quote Matt. vi. 14 in connexion with this passage. There Christ says, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." What has that to do with converting sinners from their sins? Is "Forgive, that ye may be forgiven," even parallel to "*Convert*, that ye may be forgiven"? It is very far indeed from being equivalent to it. The exact parallel would be, "Convert, that ye may be converted;" and where in either the Old or the New Testament do we find any such teaching as that? What we *do* find is the converse of it: "Be converted, that ye may convert. Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt. vii. 5). And this brings us to the other reason why this interpretation ought to be set aside. (2) We cannot suppose that St. James would contemplate, not merely as a possible case, but as the normal condition of things, that a Christian would undertake the task of converting others while his own conscience was burdened with a multitude of sins. He no doubt assumed, and meant his readers to assume, that before taking this very glorious, but also very difficult work upon themselves, Christians would at least have repented of their own sins, and thus have won the assurance that they were covered

and forgiven. As we have seen, St. James shows an intimate personal knowledge of the teaching of Christ, and especially of that portion of it which is contained in the Sermon on the Mount. It is difficult to believe that any one who was acquainted with the fundamental principle involved in the saying just quoted, about the mote and the beam, would end his exhortations to the Church with a declaration which, according to the view of Erasmus and others, would mean that it is precisely those who have a beam in their own eye who should endeavour to convert sinners from the error of their ways, for in this way they may get the beam removed, or at least overlooked.

It is the sins of the converted sinner that are covered when a brother has had the happiness of converting him. The saying "cover sins" is a proverbial one, and seems to have been common among the Jews. St. Peter also makes use of it (1 Peter iv. 8); and this is one of the points which make some persons think that the writer of this Epistle had seen that of St. Peter, and others that St. Peter had seen this one (see above, p. 59). The source of the saying appears to be Prov. x. 12, "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but *love covereth all transgressions*." It is, however, by no means certain that St. James is consciously quoting this saying, although his evident fondness for the sapiential books of Scripture would incline us to think that he is doing so. But the Septuagint of the passage in Proverbs has a different reading: "Friendship shall cover those who love not strife." A similar expression to the one before us occurs twice in the Psalms: "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people; Thou hast covered all their sin" (lxxxv. 2): "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (xxxii. 1). The

fact that the phrase occurs so frequently renders it impossible for us to determine the precise passage which suggested the use of the words in this place.[1] (See note at the end of this chapter.)

The statement that the converted sinner had "a multitude of sins" which are covered by his returning from "the error of his way" shows us plainly what is meant by "the error of his way" and by his "erring" or "being led astray[1] from the truth." St. James is evidently not thinking of purely dogmatic error, about which his Epistle is almost, if not entirely, silent. It is conviction as expressed in *conduct* with which he deals throughout. As we have seen again and again, the evils which he denounces are those of a sinful life: with the evils of erratic speculation he does not deal at all. Quite in harmony, therefore, with the practical character of the Epistle, we find that with him to "err from the truth" means the apostasy that is involved in a life of sin. "Of His own will God brought us forth by *the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (i. 18); and those who allow themselves to be seduced into sinful courses dishonour their Divine parentage and desert their Father's home. To recover such from the path of destruction is the blessed work to which St. James wishes to incite and encourage his readers.

It is important to recognize the fact that it is the *lives* of notorious *sinners*, and not the *views* of those who *differ from us*, that we are urged to correct. The

[1] πλανηθῇ. This aorist passive *may* have a middle signification, but it is simpler to allow it to be passive: the man has been led astray by evil influences, and he is led back by good influences. It matters not whether we regard him as led astray by sin (Bengel), or Satan, or wicked companions.

latter interpretation is not an uncommon one. The expression "err from the truth" seems at first sight to countenance it; and to many of us the work of winning over others to accept our religious opinions is much more congenial employment than that of endeavouring to reclaim the profligate. But the duty to which St. James here exhorts us is one of universal obligation. It is one which every Christian must recognize, and according to his opportunities perform; and it is one which every one, however ignorant, simple, and insignificant he may be, is able in some measure to fulfil. But comparatively few of us are qualified to deal with the erroneous opinions of others. Not infrequently those which we think to be erroneous are nearer the truth than those which we hold ourselves. Even where this is not the case, the errors may be much less hurtful than we suppose, because, with happy inconsistency, men allow the goodness of their hearts to direct their conduct, rather than the erratic convictions of their heads. And again, our efforts to change the erroneous opinions of others may do more harm than good, for it is much more easy to unsettle than to establish. We may take away a plank, without being able to supply an ark; and an inadequate or even faulty principle is better than no principle at all. The man who endeavours to act up to erroneous convictions is in a much healthier state than the man who has lost all convictions whatever. And this is the danger which always lies before us when we attempt to win others over from sincere and steadfast beliefs which seem to us to be untrue. We may succeed in shaking these beliefs; but it by no means follows that we shall be equally successful in giving them better beliefs in exchange for them. We may accomplish no

more than the miserable result of having convinced them that in religion everything is uncertain.

Of course there are times when it is our duty to do what we can to bring others over to opinions which we are persuaded are much sounder and safer than those which they at present hold; but such times are very much less frequent than many of us are inclined to believe. It is obviously our duty to undertake this difficult task when other people consult us as to their religious convictions; but the mere fact that we know what their convictions are, and that we hold them to be perilously unsound, does not establish a right on our part to attempt to change them. And as regards the passage before us, it is quite clear, both from the context and from the tenour of the whole Epistle, that the rare occasions on which we are under the obligation of endeavouring to convert others to our own ways of thinking are not the occasions to which St. James refers in these concluding sentences of his letter.

The duty of reclaiming the lost grows out of the condition of brotherhood which is assumed all through the Epistle as being the relation which exists between those who are addressed. This is manifestly the case here. "My *brethren*, if an*y* among *you* do err from the truth." If it be right to clothe and feed the naked and hungry brother, to pray for the sick brother, and for those who confess their faults to us, much more must it be right to do all that is possible to bring back from the way of death those who are walking in it, to convert them, turn them right round, and induce them to go in the opposite direction. To believe in God, to believe that we are His children, and yet to act as if the bodies and souls of others, who are equally His children, are in no degree in our keeping, and that their condition

is no concern of ours—this is indeed to have that faith which, being apart from works, is dead.

How is the conversion of the erring brother to be effected? St. James gives no explicit directions, but leaves all matters of detail to the discretion of the worker. Yet he does not leave us altogether without guidance as to what are the best methods. One of these is intimated by what immediately precedes, and the other by the general import of the letter. These two efficacious means for the conversion of sinners are, not rebuke or remonstrance, not exhortation or advice, not anger or contempt, but—*prayer* and *good example*. It is by prayer that the sick may be restored to health; it is by prayer that sinners who confess their sins may be healed; and it is by prayer that sinners, who as yet will not confess and repent, may be won over to do so. And here the appropriateness of the example of Elijah becomes evident. Elijah was a prophet, and he knew that when he prayed for drought and for rain he was praying for what was in accordance with the will of God; and it is such prayers that are sure of fulfilment. We are not prophets, and when we pray for changes of weather we cannot be sure that what we ask is in accordance with God's will. All that we can do is to submit humbly to His will, and to beg that, so far as they are in harmony with it, our desires may be granted. But when we pray for the conversion of sinners we are in the same position as Elijah. We know from the outset that we are praying for something which it is His will to grant, if only the rebellious wills of impenitent sinners do not prove insuperable: for He forces no one to be converted; He will have voluntary service, or none at all. When, therefore, we ask Him for the assistance of His Holy Spirit in

bringing back sinners from the error of their ways, we may have the greatest confidence that we are desiring that which He would have us desire, and are uniting our wills to His. This, then, is one great instrument for the conversion of our erring brethren —the *prayer of faith*, which can remove mountains of sin out of God's sight, by bringing the sinner, who has piled them up during years of sinning, to confess, and repent, and be forgiven.

The case of St. Monica, praying for the conversion of her sinful and heretical son Augustine, will occur to many as a beautiful illustration of the principle here indicated. He himself tells us of it in his immortal *Confessions* (III. xi., xii. 20, 21); how that for years, especially from his nineteenth to his twenty-eighth year, he went on seduced and seducing, deceived and deceiving, in various lusts; and how his mother continued to pray for him. "And her prayers entered into Thy presence; and yet Thou didst leave me to wallow deeper and deeper in that darkness." Then she went to a certain bishop, and entreated him to reason with her son; but he declined, saying that the time for that had not yet come. "Leave him alone for a time; only pray to God for him." But she was not satisfied, and continued to implore him with tears that he would go and see Augustine, and try to move him. At which he somewhat lost patience, and sent her away, saying, "Go, leave me, and a blessing go with thee: it is impossible that the son of such tears should perish." Which answer, as she often told her son afterwards, she accepted as if it were a voice from heaven; and all Christendom knows how her prayer was heard. He himself attributed all that was good in him to his mother's tears and prayers.

The other great instrument in accomplishing this blessed work is a *good example.* A holy life is the best sermon, the most effectual remonstrance, the strongest incentive, the most powerful plea. Without it words are of little avail; with it words are scarcely necessary. This is the instrument which St. James throughout this Epistle commends. Not words, but works; not professions, but deeds; not fair speeches, but kind acts (i. 19, 22, 27; ii. 1, 15, 16, 26; iii. 13; iv. 17). Nothing that we can say will ever make such impression upon others as what we *do* and what we *are.* Eloquence, reasoning, incisiveness, pathos, persuasiveness, all have their uses, and may be of real service in the work of winning back sinners from the error of their ways, but they are as nothing compared with holiness. It is when deep calls to deep, when life calls to life, when the life of manifest devotion at once shames and attracts the life of flagrant sin, that spirits are moved, that the loathing for vice and the longing for virtue are excited. The man whose own habitual conduct most often makes other men ashamed of themselves is the man who not only has the best of all qualifications for winning souls to God, but is actually accomplishing this work, even when he is not consciously attempting it. And such a one, when he does attempt it, will have a large measure of the requisite wisdom. The earnestness of his own life will have given him a knowledge of his own heart, and that is the best of all keys to a knowledge of the hearts of others.

There is something fatally wrong about us if we have no strong desire to bring back sinners to God. We cannot be Christ's disciples without having it. The man who would go to heaven *alone* is already off the road thither. The man whose one consuming

thought is to save his *own* soul has not yet found out the best means of saving it. The surest road to personal happiness is to devote oneself to promoting the happiness of others, and the best way to secure one's own salvation is to devote oneself to the Divine work of helping forward the salvation of others. Let the fear of giving scandal to others keep us from sin; let the hope of being a help to others encourage us in well-doing; and let our prayers be more for others than for ourselves. As Calvin says, on this passage, "We must take heed lest souls perish through our sloth whose salvation God puts in a manner in our hands Not that we can bestow salvation on them, but that God by our ministry delivers and saves those who seem otherwise to be nigh destruction."

What is the reward which St. James holds out to us to induce us to undertake the work of converting a sinner? He offers nothing; he promises nothing. The work itself is its own reward. To win back an erring brother is a thing so blessed, so glorious, so rich in incalculable results, that to have been enabled to accomplish it is reward enough—is a prize sufficient to induce any true-hearted Christian to work for it. It is no less than the "saving of a soul from death;" and who can estimate what that means? It is the "covering of a multitude of sins."

There is no need to make this last phrase include the sins which the man would otherwise have committed had he not been converted. Sins not committed cannot be covered. It is quite true that by conversion a man is saved from sins into which he would certainly have fallen; and this is a very happy result, but it is not the result pointed out by St. James. The sins which have been committed during the daily walk

towards destruction are what he has in his mind; and they are not one or two here and there, but a *multitude.* To aid a brother to get rid of these by confession and repentance is an end that amply repays all the trouble that we can take in attaining to it.

"But the number of renegades is so enormous; the multitude of impenitent sinners is so overwhelming: how is it possible to convert them?" St. James says nothing about converting multitudes; he speaks only of converting *one.* "If any (ἐάν τις) among you do err from the truth, and one convert *him.*" To bring over *one* soul from eternal death to eternal life may be within the power of any one earnest Christian. Is each one of us making the attempt? Are we making our lives as beneficent, as sympathetic, as unselfish as our opportunities admit of? Do we give a generous, or even a moderate share of encouragement to the numerous agencies which are at work to lessen the temptations and increase the means of grace for those who are living in sin, and to help and encourage those who, in however feeble a way, are making a fight against it?

"Know ye,[1] that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." With these words St. James abruptly takes leave of those whom he addresses. The letter has no formal conclusion; not because it is unfinished, or because the conclusion has been lost, but because St. James wishes by means of a sudden close to leave his last words ringing in the hearts of his readers. In this respect the Epistle reminds us of the First Epistle of St. John. "Guard

[1] This is probably the true reading.

yourselves from the idols" is the only farewell which the last of the Apostles has for his "little children;' and a very summary statement of what the conversion of one sinner means is the farewell of St. James to his "brethren." In both cases it is the abruptness of emphasis, as if the writer said, "If all else that I have written be forgotten, at least remember this."

How beautiful to find one noble soul, and enter into frequent communion with it! how happy to be the means of preserving it from defilement! but most blessed of all to be instrumental in rescuing it from degradation and destruction! "I say unto you, That there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance."

NOTE.—It is by no means impossible that in the phrase "cover a multitude of sins" neither St. James is quoting St. Peter, nor St. Peter St. James, nor either of them quoting Psalms or Proverbs, but that each of them is reproducing a saying of Christ's which is not recorded in the Gospels. The phrase occurs in both Clement of Rome (XLV.) and Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* I. xxvii.; II. xv.; IV. xviii.; *Quis Div. Salv.* xxxviii.), in all which places it may be a quotation from 1 Peter iv. 8. But in one place (*Pædag.* III. xii.) he seems to give it as a saying of our Lord's, for he couples it with a saying which is certainly His (Luke xx. 25). Clement's wording is as follows: "Love, He saith, covereth a multitude of sins; and respecting citizenship, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's;" where one and the same "He saith" (*φησί*) covers both sayings. In the *Didascalia* (II. iii.) the saying is explicitly attributed to Christ: "Because the Lord saith, Love covereth a multitude of sins." See Resch, *Agrapha; Aussercanonische Evangelienfragmente* (Leipzig, 1889), pp. 248, 249.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

"Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied."—St. Jude 1, 2.

PRECISELY as in the case of the Epistle of St. James, the question as to the authenticity of this letter resolves itself into two parts: Is the Epistle the veritable product of a writer of the Apostolic age? If it is, which of the persons of that age who bore the name of Judas is the author of it? Both of these questions can be answered with a very considerable amount of certainty.

Let us remember the right way of putting the first of these two questions. Not, Why should we believe that this Epistle was written by an Apostle or a contemporary of the Apostles? but, Why should we refuse to believe this? What reason have we for rejecting the verdict of ecclesiastics and theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries, who were well aware of the doubts which had been raised respecting the authority of the Epistle, and after full and prolonged consideration decided that it possessed full canonical authority. Not only were they in possession of evidence which is no longer available, and which rendered it probable that their decision would be correct; but the universal acceptance of their decision in all the

Churches proves that their decision was admitted to be correct by those who had ample means of testing its soundness.

The Epistle of St. Jude, like that of St. James, is reckoned by Eusebius as one of the six or seven "disputed" (*ἀντιλεγόμενα*) books of the New Testament, which fact, while it proves that misgivings had existed in some quarters respecting the authority of the letter, at the same time proves that it was not admitted into the canon by an oversight. The difficulties respecting it were well known, and were considered to be by no means fatal to its otherwise strong claim to be accepted (see above, pp. 15-18). And the difficulties respecting the two Epistles were similar in kind. 1. Many Churches remained for a considerable time without any knowledge of one or other of the two Epistles; but whereas it was in the West that the Epistle of St. James was least known, it was Eastern Churches that remained longest without knowledge of that of St. Jude. 2. Even when the Epistle did become known it remained doubtful whether the writer was a person of authority. He was possibly not an Apostle, and if he was not such, what were his claims to be heard? To these two difficulties, which were common to both Epistles, must be added another which was peculiar to that of St. Jude. It may be stated in Jerome's words. 3. "Because in it Jude derives a testimony from the Book of Enoch, which is apocryphal, it is rejected by some"[1] (*Catal. Scr. Eccl.* iv.). As we shall see hereafter, it probably makes use

[1] *A plerisque rejicitur.* Possibly this means "is rejected by *very many;*" it certainly ought not to be rendered "is rejected by *most.*" "Most" is the classical meaning of *plerique;* but in Tacitus it means no more than "very many" (*Hist.* iv. 84, etc.), and in Jerome and

of yet another apocryphal book; and it was not unreasonably doubted whether an Apostolic writer would compromise himself by the use of such literature. If he were inspired, he would know it to be apocryphal, and would abstain from quoting it; and if he did not know its apocryphal character, how could he be inspired, or his words be of any authority?

That so brief a letter should remain for a considerable time quite unknown to some Churches, is not at all surprising. Its evident Jewish tone would render it less attractive to Gentile Christians. Its making no claim to Apostolic authority raised a doubt whether it had any authority whatever, and this doubt was increased by the fact that it quotes apocryphal writings. Consequently those Christians who knew the Epistle would not always be ready to promote its circulation. Even if we were compelled to infer that silence respecting it implies ignorance of its existence, such ignorance would in most cases be very intelligible: but this perilous inference from silence in some cases can be shown to be incorrect. Hippolytus may *possibly* have remained ignorant of it; but if, as Bishop Lightfoot suggests,[1] he is the author of the supposed Greek original of the Muratorian Canon, he testifies strongly

his contemporaries it need mean no more than "some." Thus in Jerome's letter to Dardamus (*Ep.* cxxix.) we have *licet plerique eam vel Barnabæ vel Clementis arbitrentur* (of the Epistle to the Hebrews), where *plerique* = the τινές of Eusebius and Origen (*H. E.* VI. xx. 3; xxv. 14).

[1] See the *Academy* of September 21st, 1889, where he shows how much of the Fragment can be turned quite literally into Greek verse, and suggests that the εἰς πάσας τὰς γράφας, "Odes referring to all the Scriptures," mentioned among the works of Hippolytus whose titles are inscribed on his chair (see Kraus, *Real. Encykl. der Chris. Alterthümer*, I., pp. 661-64), refers to metrical compositions on the contents of the Old and New Testaments. The Fragment says respecting this

(note the *sane*) to the general reception of the Epistle. This holds good, however we may deal with the ambiguous *in catholica*, which may possibly mean "in the Catholic Church," or be a mistake for *in catholicis*, "among the Catholic Epistles." Cyprian, who never quotes the Epistle of St. Jude, must have known of it from the celebrated passage in "the master" Tertullian, whose works he was always reading. And it is quite incredible that Chrysostom, who in all his voluminous writings does not chance to quote it even once, was not familiar with its contents. The brevity of the Epistle is sufficient to explain a great deal of the silence respecting it.

The most serious item in the external evidence against the Epistle is its absence from the Peshitto, or ancient Syriac Version. The considerations already mentioned go a long way towards explaining this absence, and it is a great deal more than counterbalanced by the strong external evidence in its favour. This is surprisingly strong, especially when compared with that in favour of the Epistle of St. James. In both cases the troubles which overwhelmed the Church of Jerusalem and Jewish Christianity in the reign of Hadrian interfered with the circulation of the letters; but it is the shorter letter and the letter of the less-known writer which (so far as extant testimony goes) seems in the first instance to have obtained the wider circulation and recognition. The Muratorian Canon, as we have seen, contains it; so also does the old Latin Version. Tertullian (*De Cult. Fem.* I. iii.) vehemently contends that the Book of Enoch ought to be accepted

Epistle, "Epistola sane Iude et superscrictio (*sic*) Iohannis duas in catholica habentur, where *superscrictio* is a clerical error for *superscripti*, "the John mentioned above."

as canonical, and he clenches his argument with the fact that it is quoted by "the Apostle Jude." This appeal would have seemed dangerous rather than conclusive, if in North Africa there had been any serious misgivings about the authority of Jude's Epistle. Tertullian evidently entertained nothing of the kind. In a similar spirit Augustine asks, "What of Enoch, the seventh from Adam? Does not the canonical Epistle of the Apostle Jude declare that he prophesied?" (*De Civ. Dei*, xviii. 38). Clement of Alexandria quotes it as Scripture (*Pæd.* III. viii., and *Strom.* III. ii.), and commented upon it in his *Hypotyposeis* (Eus. *H. E.* VI. xiv. 1), of which we probably still possess some translations into Latin made under the direction of Cassiodorus. Origen, although he was aware that it was not universally received, for in one place he uses the cautious expression, "If any receive the Epistle of Jude," yet accepted it thoroughly himself, as the frequent citations of it in his works show. In one passage he speaks of it as "an Epistle of but few lines, yet full of the strong words of heavenly grace" (*Comm.* on Matt. xiii. 55). Athanasius places it in his list of the canonical Scriptures without any mark of doubt. And Didymus, head of the Catechetical School at Alexandria, and instructor of Jerome and Rufinus, condemns the opposition which some offered to the Epistle on account of the statement respecting the body of Moses (ver. 9), just as Jerome virtually condemns those who opposed it because of the quotation from the Book of Enoch.

This evidence, it will be observed, is mostly Western. The blank as regards the East is to some extent filled by the letter of the Synod at Antioch against Paul of Samasota, A.D. 269. Portions of this letter have been

preserved by Eusebius, and Malchion, the presbyter who chiefly composed it, seems to have had the Epistle of Jude in his mind when he wrote. This is chiefly evident in the tone of the letter; but here and there the wording approaches that of St. Jude; *e.g.* "denying his God [and Lord]" reminds us of "denying our only Master and Lord" (Jude 4); and "not guarding the faith which he once held" may be suggested by "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The quotations from Jude in Ephrem Syrus (*c.* A.D. 308-73) are somewhat discredited, for they occur only in the Greek translations of his works, some of which, however, were made in his lifetime; but the quotations may be insertions made by translators.

That so short a letter should have so much testimony in its favour is remarkable; and although it may be a slight exaggeration to say, with Zahn, that about A.D. 200 it was accepted "in the Church of all lands round the Mediterranean Sea" (*Gesch. d. Neutest. Kanons*, I., p. 321), yet even Harnack admits that this is not much in excess of the truth. The only abatement which he suggests is that the misgivings to which Origen on one single occasion bears witness, show that the Epistle was not *everywhere* in the East part of the New Testament Scriptures (*Das N. T. um d. Jahr* 200, p. 79). We may take it, therefore, as sufficiently proved that this letter was written by one who belonged to the Apostolic age. Had it been a forgery of the second century, it would not have found this general acceptance. Moreover, a forger would have chosen some person of greater fame and greater authority as the supposed writer of the Epistle, or would at least have made Jude an Apostle; and above all, he would

have betrayed some *motive* for the forgery. There is nothing in the letter to indicate any such motive. Renan accepts the Epistle as a genuine relic of the Apostolic age, and indeed places it as early as A.D. 54; yet his view of it would lead other people to regard it as a forgery, for it supplies a strong motive. Renan considers it to be an attack on St. Paul. The Clementine literature shows us how a heretic of the second century can make a covert attack on the Apostle of the Gentiles; and if we could believe that the writer of this Epistle had St. Paul in his mind when he denounced those who "in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities," we should be ready enough to believe that he was not really "Judas, brother of James," but one who did not dare to say openly in the Church the accusations which he tried to insinuate. But no critic has accepted this strange theory of Renan's, and it is hardly worth while asking, Why was not St. Peter or St. John taken as the authority wherewith to counteract the influence of St. Paul? Of what weight would the words of the unknown Jude be in comparison with his? Renan's literary acuteness recognizes in this Epistle a veritable product of the first century: his prejudices respecting anti-Pauline tendencies among the Apostolic writers lead him amazingly astray as to the meaning of its contents.

It remains to consider the second part of the question respecting the authenticity of this Epistle. We are justified in believing that it is a writing of the Apostolic age, by a person bearing the name of Judas or Jude. But to which of the persons who bore that name in the first age of the Church is the letter to be assigned? Only two persons have to be considered—(1) "Judas

not Iscariot," who seems also to have been called Lebbæus or Thaddæus, for in the lists of the Apostles Thaddæus or Lebbæus (the readings are confused) stands in Matthew x. and Mark iii. as the equivalent of "Judas [the son] of James" in Luke vi. and Acts i.; and (2) Judas one of the four brethren of the Lord; the names of the other three being James, Joseph or Joses, and Simon (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3). These two are sometimes identified, but the identification is highly questionable, although the Authorized Version encourages us to make it by giving to "Judas of James" the improbable meaning, "Judas the *brother* of James," instead of the usual meaning, "Judas the *son* of James."[1] In other words, the Authorized Version assumes that the writer of this Epistle is the Apostle "Judas not Iscariot;" the writer calls himself "brother of James," and the Authorized Version makes this Apostle to be "the brother of James."

We have seen already that both Tertullian and Augustine speak of the writer of this Epistle as an Apostle. So also does Origen, but only in two passages, of which the Greek original is wanting (*De Principiis*, III. ii. 1; *Comm. on Romans* v. 13, vol. iv., 549). In no passage of the Greek works, and in no other passage of the Latin translations, does he call Jude an Apostle; so that the addition of Apostle in these two places may be an insertion of his not very accurate translator Rufinus. But even if the authority of Origen is to be added to that of Tertullian and Augustine, the opinion that the author of this letter

[1] The Genevan Version introduced this rendering. Previous versions either leave the meaning doubtful, "Judas of James," as Wiclif, or translate "James' *sonne*," as Tyndale and Cranmer. Luther also is for "son."

was an Apostle is not probable. Had he been such, it would have been natural to mention the fact as a claim on the attention of his readers, instead of merely contenting himself with naming his relationship to his much more distinguished brother James. It is not to the point to urge that St. Paul does not always call himself an Apostle in his Epistles. He was a well-known person, especially after his four great Epistles had been published, in all of which he styles himself an Apostle. In the two to the Thessalonians he does not, probably because he there associates Silvanus and Timothy with himself (but see 1 Thess. ii. 6). St. Jude was comparatively unknown, having written nothing else, and having probably travelled little. The charge, "Remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 17), although it does not necessarily imply that the writer himself is not one of these Apostles, yet would be more suitable to one who did not possess Apostolic rank. And when we ask what *James* is meant, when he styles himself "brother of James," the answer cannot be doubtful; it is James the brother of the Lord, one of the three "Pillars" of the Jewish Christian Church, first overseer of the Church of Jerusalem, and author of the Epistle which bears his name. The Epistle of Jude is evidently by a Jewish Christian, who, while writing to all that have been called to the faith, evidently has Jewish Christians chiefly in his mind. To such a writer it was well worth while to mention that he was brother of that James who was so revered by all his fellow countrymen. Reasons have been given already for believing that this James was not an Apostle (pp. 27-29), and these will confirm us in the opinion that his brother Jude was not such.

The question of their relationship to Jesus Christ has also been discussed (pp. 31, 32), and need not be re-opened here. If it be argued that, had St. Jude been the brother of the Lord, he would have mentioned the fact, we may securely answer that he would not have done so. "As the author of the *Adumbrationes* centuries ago remarked, religious feeling would deter him, as it did his brother James, in his Epistle, from mentioning this. The Ascension had altered all Christ's human relationships, and His brethren would shrink from claiming kinship after the flesh with His glorified body. This conjecture is supported by facts. Nowhere in primitive Christian literature is any authority claimed on the basis of nearness of kin to the Redeemer. He Himself had taught Christians that the lowliest among them might rise above the closest of such earthly ties (Luke xi. 27, 28); to be spiritually the "servant of Jesus Christ" was much more than being His actual brother."[1]

We may suppose that Jude, like the rest of his brethren (John vii. 5), did not at first believe in the Messiahship of Jesus, but was converted by the convincing event of the Resurrection (Acts i. 14). We know that he was married, not merely from the general statement made by St. Paul respecting the brethren of the Lord (1 Cor. ix. 5), but from the interesting story told by Hegesippus, and preserved by Eusebius (*H. E.* III. xx. 1-8), that two grandsons of Jude were taken before Domitian as being of the royal family of David,

[1] These words are quoted from a commentary which the writer of this volume wrote in 1879 for Messrs. Cassell, in the *New Testament Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Bishop Ellicott (p. 505), of which, through the courtesy of the publishers, he is allowed to make use for the present work.

and therefore dangerous to his rule. "For," says Hegesippus, "he was afraid of the appearance of the Christ, as Herod was." In answer to his questions, they stated that they were indeed of the family of David, but were poor and humble persons, who supported themselves by their own labour; in proof of which they showed their horny hands. When further questioned respecting the Christ and His kingdom, they said that it was not earthly, but heavenly, and would arise at the end of the world, when He came to judge the living and the dead. Whereupon Domitian contemptuously dismissed them as too simple to be dangerous, and ordered that the persecution of the descendants of David should cease. These two men were afterwards honoured in the Churches, both as confessors and as being near of kin to the Lord. A fragment of Philip of Side (*c.* A.D. 425) lately discovered says that Hegesippus gave the names of these two men as Zocer and James (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, V. 2, p. 169).

This narrative implies that both St. Jude and the father of these grandsons were already dead, and this gives us a terminus respecting the date of the Epistle. St. Jude was almost certainly dead when Domitian came to the throne, in A.D. 81, and therefore this letter was written before that date. Whether, as Hilgenfeld and others would have us believe, the Epistle is aimed at Gnostic errors which did not arise until the second century, will be considered hereafter, when the nature of the evils denounced by St. Jude is discussed; but the evidence which has been examined thus far entirely agrees with the supposition that the letter was written during the Apostolic age.

It is not impossible that in calling himself "brother

of James" St. Jude is thinking of his brother's *Epistle*, and wishes his readers to consider that the present letter is to be taken in conjunction with that of St. James. Both letters are Palestinian in origin and Jewish in tone; and they are almost entirely practical in their aim, dealing with grave errors in conduct. Those which are denounced by St. Jude are of a grosser kind than those denounced by St. James, but they resemble the latter in being errors of behaviour rather than of creed. They are to a large extent the *outcome* of pernicious principles; but it is the vicious lives of these "ungodly men" that are condemned more than their erroneous beliefs. St. Jude, therefore, may be appealing not only to his brother's position and authority as a recommendation for himself, but also to his brother's Epistle, which many of his readers would know and respect.

The attempts which have been made to find a locality for St. Jude's readers altogether fail. Palestine, Asia Minor, Alexandria have all been suggested; but the letter does not offer sufficient material for the formation of a reasonable opinion. "To them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ," is a formula which embraces *all* Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, and whether inside or outside Palestine. The topics introduced are such as would chiefly interest Jewish Christians, and it is probable that the writer has the Jewish Christians of Palestine and the adjoining countries chiefly in his mind; but we have no right to limit the natural meaning of the formal address which he himself has adopted. All Christians, without limitation, are the objects of St. Jude's solicitude.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE. THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

"Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."—St. JUDE 3.

THE Greek of the opening sentence of this passage, in which St. Jude explains his reason for writing this Epistle, is ambiguous. The words "of our common salvation" (*περὶ τῆς κοινῆς ἡμῶν σωτηρίας*) may go either with what precedes or with what follows. But there is little doubt that both the Authorized and the Revised Versions are right in taking them with what precedes. The true connexion is, not, "While I was giving all diligence to write unto you, I was constrained to write unto you of our common salvation," but, "While I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith." This Epistle can scarcely be called a letter "about our common salvation." The meaning is that St. Jude had intended to write such a letter, but the crisis created by the entrance of these ungodly men into the Church constrained him to write a letter of a different kind, viz. the one which lies before us. That he had already

begun to write a letter "respecting our common salvation," and that we have here to lament the loss of another Epistle besides the lost Epistles of St. Paul and St. John (1 Cor. v. 9; 3 John 9), is neither stated nor implied.[1] St. Jude had been thinking very earnestly about writing a more general and comprehensive Epistle, when he realized that the presence of a very serious evil required immediate action, and accordingly he writes at once to point out the existing peril, and to denounce those who are the authors of it. It is the duty of all Christians to be on their guard, and to be unflinching in their defence of the truth which has been committed to them to preserve and cherish.

"The faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." This does not mean, which was delivered by God to the Apostles, but which was delivered by the Apostles to the Church. "The saints" here, as so often in the New Testament (Acts ix. 13, 32, 41; xxvi. 10; Rom. viii. 27; xiii. 13; xv. 25, 26, 31; etc., etc.), means *all* Christians. If the whole nation of the Jews was a "holy people" (λαὸς ἅγιος), "a peculiar treasure unto Jehovah from among all peoples" (Exod. xix. 5), by reason of their special election by Him (Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2, 21); if they were "saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 18, 22, 25), much more might this be said of Christians, who had inherited all the spiritual privileges of the Jews, and had received others in abundance, far exceeding any that the Jews had ever possessed. Christians also, in a still higher sense, were "an elect

[1] This is an assumption of De Wette, who in this followed Sherlock, and was followed by Brückner. It is worth noting that the Vulgate here is as ambiguous as the original Greek: "*Omnem sollicitudinem faciens scribendi vobis de communi vestra salute necesse habui scribere vobis*," etc.

race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Peter ii. 9). The Christians of Corinth, Ephesus, and Colossæ, in spite of the enormous evils which they practised or sanctioned, or at least tolerated, are still called "saints." They are holy, not as being persons of holy life, but as being devoted to God. Of course such persons *ought* to be holy in conduct, but to call them "saints" does not assert that they are so. The name asserts the fact of being set apart by God for Himself, and implies what ought to be the result of such separation. "Thus the main idea of the term is *consecration*. But though it does not assert moral qualifications as a fact in the persons so designated, it implies them as a duty."[1] To each individual Christian, therefore, the name is at once an honour, an exhortation, and a reproach. It tells of his high calling, it exhorts him to live up to it, and it reminds him of his grievous shortcomings.

"The faith *once for all delivered* unto the saints" (*τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει*): both the adverb, "once for all," and the aorist participle, "delivered," are worthy of special notice. "The faith" does not mean any set formula of articles of belief, nor the internal reception of Christian doctrine, but the *substance* of it; it is equivalent to what St. Paul and the Evangelists call "the Gospel," viz. that body of truth which brings salvation to the soul that receives it. This Faith, or this Gospel, has been once for all delivered to Christians. No other will be given, for there is no other. Whatever may be delivered by any one in future cannot be a gospel at all. The one true Gospel is complete and final, and admits of no successors and no supplements (Gal. i. 6-9).

[1] Lightfoot, *Philippians*, note on i. 1.

"The faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Does this exclude all possibility of a "development of Christian doctrine"? That depends upon what one means by "development." The expression has been interpreted to mean "that the increase and expansion of the Christian creed and ritual, and the variations which have attended the process in the case of individual writers and Churches, are the necessary attendants on any philosophy or polity which takes possession of the intellect and heart, and has had any wide or extended dominion; that from the nature of the human mind, time is necessary for the full comprehension *and perfection* of great ideas; and that the highest and most wonderful truths, though communicated to the world once for all by inspired teachers, could not be comprehended all at once by the recipients, but, as received and transmitted by minds not inspired and through media which were human, have required only the longer time and deeper thought for their full elucidation."[1] If the ambiguous expression "and perfection" be omitted, one may readily allow that development of Christian doctrine in this sense has taken place. To say that time is needed for the *full comprehension* of the great truths which were communicated to the Church once for all by the Apostles is one thing; to say that time is needed for the *perfection* of those truths may or may not be quite another. And the manner in which the subject is treated in the famous Essay from which the passage just quoted is taken shows that what is meant by the "perfecting" of the truths is a very different thing from the full comprehension of their original contents; it means

[1] J. H. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London, Toovey, 1845), p. 27.

making additions to the original contents in order to remedy supposed deficiencies. In this sense it may be confidently asserted, and as loyal Christians we are bound to assert, that there is no such thing as development of Christian doctrine. If there be such a thing, then we cannot stop short with those developments which can in some measure be called Christian. The author himself reminds us that "no one has power over the issues of his principles; we cannot manage our argument, and have as much of it as we please, and no more" (p. 29). If the faith once for all delivered to the saints was defective, and needed to be supplemented by subsequent additions, why may not Christianity itself be, as some have maintained, only a phase in the development of religion, which in process of time is to be superseded by something wholly unchristian? The transition is easily made from the position of the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* to that of Channing, that "it makes me smile to hear immortality claimed for Catholicism or Protestantism, or for any past interpretations of Christianity: as if the human soul had exhausted itself in its infant efforts; as if the men of one or a few generations could bind the energy of human thought and affection for ever;"[1] and thence to the position of Strauss, who, in his latest and most dreary work, on *The Old and the New Faith*, asks the question, "Are we still Christians?" and answers it emphatically in the negative. The chief doctrines of Christianity are to him childish or repulsive beliefs, which thoughtful men have long since left behind. We may still in some sense be religious; but Christianity has done its work, and is rightly being dismissed from

[1] *Letter on Catholicism: Complete Works* (Routledge, 1884), p. 346.

the stage.[1] This is the advanced thinking of which St. John writes in his Second Epistle: "Every one that *goeth onward* (πᾶς ὁ προάγων), and *abideth not in the doctrine of Christ*, hath not God" (ver. 9). There is an advance which involves desertion of first principles; and such an advance is not progress, but apostasy.

But *does* the development of doctrine, in the sense contended for by the author of the celebrated Essay, mean making actual additions to the faith once for all delivered, as distinct from arriving at a better comprehension of the contents and logical consequences of the original deposit? This question must be answered in the affirmative, for various reasons. The whole purpose of the Essay, and the actual expressions used in it, require this meaning; and that this is the obvious meaning has been assumed by Roman Catholic as well as Protestant critics, and (so far as the present writer is aware) this interpretation has never been resented as illegitimate by the author. The whole argument is admittedly "an hypothesis to account for a difficulty," "an expedient to enable us to solve what has now become a necessary and an anxious problem" (pp. 27, 28), viz. the enormous difference between the sum total of Roman Catholic doctrines and those which can be found in the Christian documents of the first two or three centuries. The Essay is believed by its author to furnish "a solution of such a number of the reputed corruptions of Rome as might form a fair ground for trusting her where the investigation had not been pursued" (p. 29). And that the faith once for all delivered is regarded as in need of supplements and additions seems to be implied in such language as

[1] *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (Leipzig, 1872), pp. 13-91: see especially pp. 90, 91.

the following: "In whatever sense the need and its supply are a proof of design in the visible creation, in the same do *the gaps*, if the word may be used, *which occur in the structure of the original creed of the Church*, make it probable that those developments, which grow out of the truths which lie around them, were intended to complete it" (pp. 101, 102). It is the business of succeeding ages of the Church to "keep what was exact, and *supply what was deficient*" (p. 354).

The author of the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* states in another of his works that when he was admitted to the Church of Rome he embraced volumes containing the writings of the Christian Fathers, crying out that now they were really his own. The action and exclamation were thoroughly inconsistent with the position maintained throughout the Essay, and since then adopted by numbers of Roman controversialists. He ought rather to have cleared his shelves of the works of the Fathers, and to have consigned them to the lumber-room, with the remark, "Now I need never look at you any more." As Bishop Cornelius Mussus (Musso) said long ago, "For my part, to speak quite frankly, I would give more credence to a single Pope than to a thousand Augustines, Jeromes, and Gregorys" (*In Epist. ad Rom.* xiv., p. 606, Venet., 1588, quoted in Hardwick's edition of Archer Butler's *Letters on Romanism*, p. 394). It is the latest and most modern works on Roman theology, especially those which expound the utterances of the most recent Popes, that deserve to be studied, if the theory of the development be correct. According to that theory, the teaching of the primitive Church was certainly immature and defective, and possibly even erroneous. In order to find out what primitive

writers meant, or *ought to have meant*, we must look to the latest developments. *They* are the criteria by which to test the teaching of the early Church; it is beginning at the wrong end to test the developments by Christian antiquity. In former times Romanists were at great pains to show that traces of their peculiar tenets could be found in the writers of the first few centuries; and in not a few cases the works of these primitive writers were interpolated, in order to make out a fair case. Criticism has exposed these forgeries, and it has been demonstrated that the early Christian teachers were ignorant of whole tracts of Roman doctrine and practice. Roman controversy has therefore entirely shifted its ground. It now freely admits that these things were unknown to Irenæus, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and Augustine; but for the simple reason that, when they wrote, these things had not yet been revealed. The Church was still ignorant that the Blessed Virgin was conceived without sin, was taken bodily to heaven after her death, and ought to be invoked in prayer; it was still ignorant of the doctrine of purgatory, of indulgences, and of the necessity of being in communion with the Church of Rome. It will not do to say that Christ and His Apostles planted the *germs* of these things, and that for centuries the germs did not expand and fructify, and therefore remained unnoticed. For, first, how can there be *a germ of an historical fact*, such as the supposed removal of the Virgin's body to heaven, which is most happily named an "assumption"? Secondly, now that the fruit *has* appeared, we ought to be able to trace it back to the germ which for so long was ignored. And thirdly, if the germs were really deposited by Christ and His Apostles, they would have

developed in a *somewhat* similar manner in all parts of Christendom. Different surroundings will account for some variety of development, but not for absolute difference in kind. The germ respecting communion with the Church of Rome, if there was one, developed in the East, where all germs were in the first instance planted, into the doctrine that no such communion was necessary.[1] Therefore, from the Roman point of view, it is necessary to maintain that the development of Christian doctrine involves, not merely the better comprehension of the contents of doctrines, and the expansion of seeds and germs of truth, but the admission of actual supplements and additions, derived from new revelations of fresh items of truth. As the Jesuit Father Harper said, in his reply to Dr. Pusey's *Eirenicon*, "Christ grew in wisdom daily. So does the Church, not in mere appearance, but of truth. Her creed, therefore, can never shrink back to the dimensions of the past, but must ever enlarge with the onward future.'

Hence the necessity for the doctrine of Infallibility. For Roman developments are not the only ones. The Eastern Churches have theirs; Protestant Churches have theirs; and outside these there are other developments, both non-Christian and anti-Christian. Unless there is some authority which can say, "Our developments are Divinely inspired and necessary, while all others are superfluous or wrong," the doctrine of Development may be used with as much force against Rome as for her. Consequently, we find the author of the Essay using the theory of Development as an argument for that of the Infallibility. "If the Christian

[1] See Dr. Salmon's admirable work on *The Infallibility of the Church* (Murray, 1888), pp. 33-41.

doctrine, as originally taught, admits of true and important developments, . . . this is a strong antecedent argument in favour of a provision in the Dispensation for putting a seal of authority upon those developments. . . . If certain large developments of it are true, they must surely be accredited as true" (pp. 117-19).

This is further proof that what is contemplated in this theory is not mere logical deductions from revealed truth; for logical deductions vindicate themselves by an appeal to the reason, and need no sanction from an infallible authority. Developments are indeed said to follow by way of "logical sequence," but this term is made to receive an enlarged meaning. "It will include any progress of the mind from one judgment to another, as, for instance, *by way of moral fitness*, which may not admit of analysis into premiss and conclusion" (p. 397). Thus the "deification of St. Mary" is a "logical sequence" of our Lord's Divinity. "The votaries of Mary do not exceed the true faith, unless the blasphemers of her Son came up to it. The Church of Rome is not idolatrous, unless Arianism is orthodoxy" (p. 406). The following criticism, therefore, does not seem to be unjust: "However the theory may be modified by the subsequent additional supposition of infallible guidance, it is quite evident that, considered in itself, its internal spirit and scope (especially as illustrated by its alleged Roman instances) are nothing short of this, that *everything* which *certain* good men in the Church, or men assumed to be such, can by reasoning *or feeling* collect from a revealed truth is, by the mere fact of its recognition [*i.e.* by the supposed infallible guide], admissible and authoritative."[1] This is indeed

[1] Archer Butler's *Letters on Romanism*, Revised by Rev. Charles Hardwick (Macmillan, 1858), p. 91.

a wide door to open for the reception of additions to the faith!

That St. Jude lays much stress on the fact that the sum total of the Gospel, and not merely the elementary portions of it, have been once for all committed to the Church, is shown, not only by the prominence which he gives to the thought here, but by his repetition of it a few lines later, when he begins the main portion of his Epistle: "I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know *all things once for all*" (ver. 5). Any teaching of new doctrines is not only unnecessary, it is also utterly inadmissible. And every Christian has his responsibilities in this matter. He is to "contend earnestly" (ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι), with all the energy and watchfulness of an athlete in the arena, for the preservation of this sacred deposit, lest it be lost or corrupted. And the manner in which this earnest contest is to be maintained is not left doubtful; not with the sword, as Beza rightly remarks, nor with intemperate denunciation or indiscriminate severity, but with the mighty influence of a holy life, built upon the foundation of our "most holy faith" (vv. 20-23). It is in this way that lawful development of Christian doctrine is secured; not by additions to what was once for all delivered, but by a deeper and wider comprehension of its inexhaustible contents. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

NOTE.—In connexion with the subject treated above, chapter ix. of R. H. Hutton's sketch of *Cardinal Newman* (Methuen & Co., 1891) may be profitably read.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE PERSONS DENOUNCED IN THE EPISTLE. ITS RELATION TO 2 PETER.

"For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old set forth unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."—ST. JUDE 4.

WE have here the *occasion* of the letter stated very plainly. St. Jude was meditating a letter on a more general subject, when the grave peril created by the anti-Christian behaviour of the persons condemned in the text constrained him to write at once on this more urgent topic. An insidious invasion of the Christian Church has taken place by those who have no right to a place within it, and who endanger its peace and purity; and he dare not keep silence. The strong must be exhorted to withstand the evil; the weak must be rescued from it.

These invaders are in one respect like those who are condemned in the Epistle to the Galatians, in another respect are very unlike them. They are "false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily" (ii. 4); but they have come in, not "to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage," but to "turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." The troublers of the Galatian Church were endeavouring to *contract*

Christian liberty, whereas these ungodly men were *straining* it to the uttermost. Both ended in destroying it. The one turned the "freedom with which Christ set us free" into an intolerable yoke of Jewish bondage; the other turned it into the polluting anarchy of heathen, or worse than heathen, licence. How utterly alien these latter are from Christianity, or even from Judaism, is indicated by St. Jude's pointed introduction of the pronoun "our" in two clauses in this verse: "turning the grace of *our* God into lasciviousness, and denying *our* only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." Jehovah is "*our* God," not theirs; they are "without God in the world." And Christ is "*our* only Master and Lord," but not theirs; they have denied and rejected Him, choosing to "walk after their own lusts" (ver. 16), rather than to "walk even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). They have repudiated His easy yoke, that they may follow their own bestial desires.

Who are these "ungodly men"? Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* III. ii. *sub fin.*) thinks that St. Jude is speaking prophetically of the abominable doctrines of the Gnostic teacher Carpocrates. Some modern writers adopt this view, with the omission of the word "prophetically," and thus obtain an argument against the genuineness of the Epistle. If the writer knew the teaching of Carpocrates, he cannot have been Jude the brother of James and the brother of the Lord. The date of Carpocrates is too uncertain to make this a perfectly conclusive argument, even if we admit the assumption that the writer of this Epistle *is* alluding to his teaching; for he is sometimes placed before Cerinthus, who was contemporary with St. John. But it may be allowed as probably correct that St. Jude

was dead before Carpocrates was known as a teacher of Antinomian Gnosticism. There is, however, nothing whatever to show that it is to his teaching that St. Jude is alluding. He says nothing whatever about the *teaching* of these "ungodly men," who perhaps were not teachers at all; still less does he indicate that they belonged to those Gnostics who, from the Oriental doctrine of the absolutely evil character of matter and everything material, drew the practical conclusion that man's material body may be made to undergo every kind of experience, no matter how shameless, in order that the soul may gain knowledge; that the soul is by enlightenment too pure, and the body by nature too impure, to be capable of pollution; that filth cannot be defiled; and that pure gold remains pure, however often it may be plunged in filthiness. No such doctrine is hinted at by St. Jude. Dorner, therefore, goes beyond what is written when he says that "the persons whom Jude opposes are not merely such as have practically swerved from the right way; they are also teachers of error" (*Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Intr., p. 72, Eng. Tr.: T. and T. Clark, 1861). It is more reasonable, with De Wette, Brückner, Meyer, Kühl, Reuss, Farrar, Salmon, and others to regard these "ungodly men" as just what St. Jude describes them, and no more; libertines, who ought never to have been admitted into the Church at all; who maintained that Christians were free to live lives of gross sensuality; and who, when rebuked by the elders or other officers of the Church for their misconduct, not only refused to submit, but reviled those who were set over them. They were "teachers of error," but by their bad example, not by systematic preaching. They "screened their immoral conduct by blasphemous assumptions,"

because they assumed that "having been called for freedom," they might "use their freedom for an occasion to the flesh" (Gal. v. 13), not because they assumed that they ought to disobey the commandments of the Creator of the material universe. And for the same reason they may be called "libertines" on principle. When St. Jude says that they "denied our only Master[1] and Lord, Jesus Christ," he means that they denied Him by their lives. It is altogether unreasonable to read into this simple phrase, which is sufficiently explained by the context, a dogmatic denial of the Incarnation. That the germs of Antinomian Gnosticism are here indicated may be true enough; but they have not yet developed into a body of doctrine. Still less have those who are tainted by these germs developed into an heretical sect.[2]

It is with the verse before us that the marked resemblance between the Epistle of St. Jude and the central portion of the Second Epistle of St. Peter begins; and it continues down to ver. 18. In this short letter of twenty-five verses, only the first three and last seven verses, *i.e.* about a third of the whole, have no intimate relations with 2 Peter. The last word has not yet been spoken upon this perplexing subject. The present writer confesses that he remains still uncertain as to the true relation between the two, and that he has inclined sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other of the two rival hypotheses.

[1] The insertion of the word "God" into the authorities followed in the Authorized Version is one of the few instances in which it is possible that the Greek text of the N. T. has been corrupted in the interests of orthodoxy.

[2] See the author's *Epistles of St. John* in the *Cambridge Greek Testament*, pp. xx-xxix and 160-162.

Thus much of what he wrote on the subject more than ten years ago may be repeated now:—

"The similarity, both in substance and wording, is so great that only two alternatives are possible—either one has borrowed from the other, or both have borrowed from a common source. The second alternative is rarely, if ever, advocated; it does not explain the facts very satisfactorily, and critics are agreed in rejecting it. But here agreement ends. On the further question, as to which writer is prior, there is very great diversity of opinion. One thing, therefore, is certain, that whichever writer has borrowed, he is no ordinary borrower. He knows how to assimilate foreign material so as to make it thoroughly his own. He remains original, even while he appropriates the words and thoughts of another. He controls them, not they him. Were this not so, there would be little doubt about the matter. In any ordinary case of appropriation, if both the original and copy are forthcoming, critics do not doubt long as to which is the original. It is when the copy itself is a masterpiece, as in the case of Holbein's Madonna, that criticism is baffled. Such would seem to be the case here; and the present writer is free to confess his own uncertainty."[1]

Other persons are able to write with much more confidence. Dean Mansel says, "Some eminent modern critics have attempted, on the very precarious evidence of style, to assign the priority in time of writing to St. Jude; but there are two circumstances which appear to me to prove most conclusively that St. Jude's Epistle was written after that of St. Peter,

[1] *N. T. Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Bishop Ellicott (Cassell and Co. 1879), iii., p. 506.

and with express reference to it. The first is, that the evils which St. Peter speaks of as partly future St. Jude describes as now present. The one says, 'There *shall be* false teachers among you' (2 Peter ii. 1; the future tense being continued through the two following verses); the other says, 'There *are* certain men crept in unawares.' The other circumstance is still more to the point. St. Peter, in his Second Epistle, has the remarkable words, 'Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers (ἐμπαῖκται) shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts' (iii. 3). St. Jude has the same passage, repeated almost word for word, but expressly introduced as a citation of Apostolic language: 'But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers (ἐμπαῖκται), walking after their own ungodly lusts' (vv. 17, 18). The use of the plural number (τῶν ἀποστόλων) may be explained by supposing that the writer may also have intended to allude to passages similar in import, though differently expressed, in the writings of St. Paul (such as 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2; 2 Tim. iii. 1), but the verbal coincidence can hardly be satisfactorily explained, unless we suppose that St. Jude had principally in his thoughts, and was actually citing the language of St. Peter" (*The Gnostic Heresies of the First and Second Centuries*, Murray, 1875, pp. 69, 70). Hengstenberg puts forward the same arguments, and considers the second to be decisive as to the priority of 2 Peter.

Not less confident is Archdeacon Farrar that exactly the opposite hypothesis is the right one. "After careful consideration and comparison of the two documents

it seems to my own mind *impossible to doubt* [the italics are Dr. Farrar's] that Jude was the earlier of the two writers. . . . I must confess my inability to see how any one who approaches the inquiry with no ready-made theories can fail to come to the conclusion that the priority in this instance belongs to St. Jude. It would have been impossible for such a burning and withering blast of defiance and invective as his brief letter to have been composed on principles of modification and addition. All the marks which indicate the reflective treatment of an existing document are to be seen in the Second Epistle of St. Peter. In every instance of variation we see the reasons which influenced the later writer. . . . The notion that St. Jude endeavoured to 'improve upon' St. Peter is, I say, a literary impossibility; and if in some instances the phrases of St. Jude seem more antithetical and striking, and his description clearer, I have sufficiently accounted for the inferiority--if it be inferiority—of St. Peter by the supposition that he was a man of more restrained temperament; that he wrote under the influence of reminiscences and impressions; and that he was warning against forms of evil with which he had not come into so personal a contact" (*The Early Days of Christianity*, Cassell and Co., 1882, i., pp. 196-203).

The main arguments in favour of the view that the Second Epistle of St. Peter was used by St. Jude, besides those stated by Dean Mansel, are the following:—

(1) If 2 Peter is genuine, it is more probable that St. Jude should borrow from St. Peter than that the chief of the Apostles should borrow from one who was not an Apostle at all.

If 2 Peter is not genuine, it is improbable that the

forger would borrow from a writing which from the first was regarded with suspicion, because it quoted apocryphal literature.

(2) St. Jude tells us (ver. 3) that he wrote under pressure to meet a grave emergency, and therefore he would be more likely to make large use of suitable material ready to his hand, than one who was under no such necessity.

The main arguments on the other side are these :—

(1) It is more probable that the chief portion of a short letter should be used again with a great deal of additional matter, than that one section only of a much longer letter should be used again with very little additional matter.

(2) It is more probable that the writer of 2 Peter should omit what seemed to be difficult or likely to give offence, than that St. Jude should insert such things ; *e.g.* "*clouds* without water" (Jude 12) is a contradiction in terms, and therefore is naturally corrected to "*wells* without water" (2 Pet. ii. 17) ; the particular way in which the angels fell (Jude 6), the allusion to certain Levitical pollutions (ver. 23), and the citations from apocryphal books (vv. 9, 14, 15) are either entirely omitted by the writer of 2 Peter, or put in a way much less likely to seem offensive (ii. 4, 11). And Jude 9 has been so toned down by the writer of 2 Peter that without St. Jude's statement respecting Michael and the devil we should scarcely understand 2 Peter ii. 11.

Besides these points, there are two arguments which are used on *both* sides of the question :—

(i) There are certain elements in St. Jude's Epistle of which the writer of 2 Peter would probably have made use, had he seen them ; *e.g.* the ironical play

upon the word "kept" in "the angels which *kept* not (μὴ τηρήσαντας) their own principality. . . . He hath *kept* (τετήρηκεν) in everlasting bonds;" the telling antithesis in ver. 10, that what these sinners do not know, and cannot know, they abuse by gross irreverence; and what they know, and cannot help knowing, they abuse by gross licentiousness; and the metaphor of "wandering stars" (ver. 13), which would fit the false teachers, who lead others astray, in 2 Peter, much better than the ungodly men, who are not leaders at all, in Jude. As the writer of 2 Peter makes no use of these points, the inference is that he had never seen them.

But, on the other hand, there are certain elements in 2 Peter of which St. Jude would probably have made use, had he seen them; *e.g.* the destruction of "the world of the ungodly" by the Flood; the "eyes full of an adulteress;" and the explanation of the "great swelling words" as "promising them liberty," which would exactly have suited St. Jude's purpose in condemning those who turned liberty into license. As St. Jude makes no use of these points, the inference is that he had not seen them.

(ii) St. Jude, as will be shown presently, groups nearly everything in threes. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that wherever he can make a threefold arrangement he does so. Is this artificial grouping a mark of originality or not? Some would urge that it is the writer who is using up another's material who would be likely to add this fanciful arrangement, and that, therefore, St. Jude is the borrower. Others would urge that such triplets would be just the things to be overlooked or disregarded by the borrower, and that, therefore, St. Jude is the original.

About the existence of the triplets in Jude, and their absence in 2 Peter, there can be no question, whatever view we may hold as to their significance. They begin in the very first verse of our Epistle, and continue to the last verse, although those at the close of the letter are lost in the Authorized Version, owing to the fact that the translators used a faulty Greek text. It will be worth while to run through them. (1) Judas, a servant . . . and brother. (2) To them that are called, beloved, . . . and kept. (3) Mercy unto you and peace and love. (4) Ungodly men, turning, . . . and denying. (5) Israelites, angels, cities of the plain. (6) Defile, . . . set at nought, . . . and rail. (7) Cain, Balaam, Korah. (8) These are. . . . These are. . . . These are. . . . (9) They who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit. (10) Building up yourselves, . . . praying, . . . looking for the mercy. (11) On some have mercy; . . . and some save; . . . and on some have mercy with fear. (12) Before all time, and now, and for evermore.

Before parting with this verse it will be well to put readers on their guard against a misinterpretation of the phrase, "They who were of old set forth unto this condemnation;" a misinterpretation all the more likely to be made by those who use the Authorized Version, which has, "Who were before of old *ordained* to this condemnation." The text is a favourite one with Calvinists; but when rightly translated and understood, it gives no support to extreme predestinarian theories. When literally rendered it runs, "Who have been of old *written down beforehand* for this *sentence;*" or possibly, "Who have been written *up* beforehand;" for the metaphor may be borrowed from the custom of posting up the names of those who had to appear

before the court for trial. Be this as it may, "of old" (*πάλαι*) cannot refer to the eternal counsel and decree of Almighty God, but to something in human history, something remote from St. Jude's own day, but in time, and not in eternity. Perhaps some of the warnings and denunciations in the prophets of the Old Testament or in the *Book of Enoch* are in his mind. "Condemnation" is a justifiable rendering of the Greek word (*κρίμα*), because it is manifest from the context that the sentence or judgment intended is one of condemnation, and not of acquittal; but this word when coupled with "ordained" is likely to be grievously misunderstood. "Ordained to condemnation" suggests with fatal facility "predestined to damnation"—a doctrine which has perhaps been a more fruitful cause of the rejection of Christianity than all the doctrines included in the creeds.

Probably in all ages of the Church there have been men such as St. Jude here describes—nominal members of the Church who are nothing but a scandal to it, and professing Christians whose whole life is one flagrant denial of Christ. Such persons certainly trouble Christendom now. By their luxury and licentiousness they set an evil example and create a pestilential moral atmosphere. They practise no self-control, and sneer at self-denial in others. They reject all Christian discipline, and mock at those who endeavour to maintain it. And sometimes they are not at once recognized in their true character. They are plausible and amusing, obviously not strict, but not obviously scandalous in their manner of life. It is then that such men become specially dangerous. Such may have been the case in the Churches which St. Jude has in mind. Therefore he strips off all this specious disguise, and describes

these profligate scoffers according to their true characters. Moreover, we must remember that there were some, and perhaps many, who, like Simon Magus (Acts viii. 13), accepted baptism without any real appreciation of the meaning of Christianity, and who remained either Jews or heathen at heart, long after they had enrolled themselves as Christians. Where dangerous material of this kind abounded, it was necessary to put the faithful on their guard about the danger; and hence the strength and vehemence of St. Jude's language. A sharp, clear statement of the evil was necessary to put the weak and the unwary on their guard against a peril to which they might easily succumb, before they were fully aware of its existence. We all of us need such warnings still, not merely to form a truer estimate of the nature and tendency of certain forms of evil, and thus keep on our guard against courting needless temptation, but also to preserve us from becoming in our own persons, through manifest self-indulgence and carelessness of life, a snare and a stumbling-block to our brethren.

NOTE.—On the question as to which of the two Epistles is prior, the opinion of scholars has been greatly divided; but a comparison of the following lists will show that among more recent critics the decision is commonly in favour of the priority of our Epistle:—

For the priority of 2 Peter: Bauer, Beausobre, Benson, Bloomfield, Dahl, Dietlein, Dodwell, Estius, Fronmüller, Hänlein, Hengstenberg, Heydenreich, Hofmann, Lange, Lenfant, Lumby, Luthart, Luther, Mansel, Michaelis, Mill, Œcumenius, Pott, Schaff, Schmid, Schoff, Schulze, Semler, Steinfass, Stier, Stolz, Storr, Thiersch, Wetstein, Wolf, Wordsworth, Zachariæ, and others.

For the priority of St. Jude: Alford, Angus, Arnaud, Bleek, Brückner, Caffin, Credner, Davidson, De Wette, Eichhorn, Ewald, F. W. Farrar, Guerike, Hatch, Herder, Hilgenfeld, Hug, Huther, Kühl, Kurz, Mayerhoff, Neander, Plumptre, Reuss, Salmon, Schenkel, Sieffert, Thorold, Weiss, Wiesinger, and others. Plumptre makes

the remarkable suggestion that St. Jude may have written *both* letters. He first wrote his own Epistle, then was sent with it to St. Peter by St. James, and finally acted as St. Peter's amanuensis in writing 2 Peter (*Cambridge Bible for Schools, Epistle of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 1879, pp. 79, 80, 88, 89).

On this point also Dr. Döllinger changed his mind (see p. 31). In *The First Age of the Church* (pp. 93, 108, Eng. Tr., 2nd ed.) he maintained the priority of 2 Peter. June 22nd, 1879, he wrote to me, "Its priority to the Epistle of Jude I *cannot* believe" (*kann ich gar nicht glauben*).

CHAPTER XXXIII.

DOUBTFUL READINGS AND THE THEORY OF VERBAL INSPIRATION. THREE PALMARY INSTANCES OF DIVINE VENGEANCE UPON GRIEVOUS SIN.

"Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, how that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not. And angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, He hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire."—ST. JUDE 5-7.

WITH these three verses the main portion of the Epistle begins, the first three verses being introductory. These put before us three instances of Divine vengeance upon those who were guilty of grievous sin—the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, the impure angels, and the inhabitants of the cities of the plain; and in the three verses which follow (8-10) St. Jude points out the similarity between the offences of these wicked persons and the offences of the libertines who are provoking God to execute similar vengeance upon them. It is quite possible that we have here the explanation of the words, "Who were of old set forth unto this condemnation" (ver. 4). The doom of these impious profligates has long since been written in the doom of those who sinned in a similar manner.

The Greek text of the opening verse exhibits a great

variety of readings, and one may suspect with Westcott and Hort that there has been some primitive error, and that none of the existing readings are correct. Of the points in which they differ from one another three require notice:—

(1) In the words, "The Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt," the authorities vary between "the Lord" (with or without the article), "God," and "Jesus." This last is far the best attested (AB, the best cursives, the Vulgate, both Egyptian Versions, both Ethiopic, the margin of the Armenian, and several Fathers); but the internal evidence against it is immense. Nowhere else in Scripture is Jesus said to be the Author of anything which took place before the Incarnation. Had St. Jude written "Christ," we might have compared "the rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x. 4). But the general adoption of the reading "Jesus" shows how completely in Christian thought and language the Man Jesus had become identified with the Eternal Son. If "Lord" be correct (*κύριος*, without the article), it should be understood as meaning Jehovah; and therefore "God," though not likely to be right as the reading, is right as an interpretation. In the Latin translation of the *Hypotyposeis* of Clement of Alexandria we have these two readings combined, *Dominus Deus*, and the Greek of Didymus has "Lord Jesus" combined. Possibly all three readings are insertions, and should be omitted, the true text being simply, "He who saved a people out of the land of Egypt" (*ὁ λαὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου σώσας*).[1]

[1] W. & H. point out that OTIO = *ὅτι ὁ* might easily be corrupted into OTIIC = *ὅτι ἰησοῦς*, or into OTIKC = *ὅτι κύριος* (vol. ii., p. 106. See also Scrivener, 3rd ed., p. 656).

(2) In the words, "Though ye know all things once for all," some authorities, which were followed by the translators of 1611, have "this" for "all things," while one authority makes "all" to be masculine instead of neuter (*πάντας* for *πάντα*). This last *may* be correct, for the final letter of the masculine might easily be lost (especially in front of *ὅτι*); and in that case the meaning would be, "though ye all know it," *i.e.*, "know what I am going to point out." There is a similar confusion of reading in 1 John ii. 20, where for "Ye know all things" (*οἴδατε πάντα*) we should perhaps read, "Ye all know" (*οἴδατε πάντες*). But here the masculine has too little support to be adopted.

(3) The Sinaitic MS. transposes the "once" or "once for all" (*ἅπαξ*) from "know" to "saved," and makes it answer to the "afterwards," or "the second time" (*τὸ δεύτερον*) which follows. In this it is supported by the Armenian Version and a single cursive of the fourteenth century.[1] If it were adopted, the sentence would run thus: "Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things, how that the Lord, having *once* saved a people out of the land of Egypt, *afterwards* destroyed them that believed not." The correspondence between "once" and "afterwards" —"having *a single time* saved, . . . *the second time* He destroyed"—is at first sight attractive; but it is precisely this superficial attractiveness which has caused the corruption of the text. A recent writer pleads for its adoption, but his reasons are not convincing.[2] The

[1] The Latin translation of Clement of Alexandria has the same reading: "*Quoniam Dominus Deus semel populum de terra Ægypti liberans deinceps eos, qui non crediderunt, perdidit.*"

[2] W. S. Wood, *Problems in the N. T.* (Rivingtons, 1890), pp. 161-164.

external evidence against the proposed transposition is enormous; and there is no strong internal evidence against the best-attested text (as there is against the reading "Jesus") to turn the scale. "Though ye know all this *once for all*" makes excellent sense; and so also does "He who saved a people out of Egypt, *the second time* (viz. in the wilderness) destroyed them that believed not."

This collection of various readings, out of which it is impossible to select the true text with anything like certainty, is worth remembering in considering the theory of *verbal* inspiration. If every word that St. Jude wrote was supernaturally dictated, why has not every word been supernaturally preserved? It is manifest that God has not, either miraculously or in any other way, secured that the exact words written by St. Jude should come down to us without alteration. The alterations are so ancient, so widely diffused, and so numerous, that we are unable to decide what St. Jude's exact words were. We are not even certain that among the numerous variations we have got his exact words. This is not a common case. The usual problem, when various readings occur, is to select the right reading out of several that have been handed down to us, there being no reason to doubt that one of them is the original reading of the autograph. But there are a few passages, and this is one of them, where one may reasonably doubt whether the original reading has not been altogether lost (Acts vii. 46; xiii. 32 [comp. Heb. xi. 4]; xix. 40; xxvi. 28; Rom. xv. 32; 1 Cor. xii. 2; Col. ii. 18, 23; Heb. iv. 2; x. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 7; 2 Tim. i. 13; 2 Peter iii. 10, 12; Jude 22, 23). This result might easily be produced through an error in the earliest copies made from the original

document, or through a slip made by the amanuensis who wrote the original document. There are minds to which this supposition is very repugnant; and there are writers who assure us that in Biblical criticism "*conjectural emendation* must never be resorted to, even in passages of acknowledged difficulty," or that "conjectural criticism is entirely banished from the field." But if the whole of an Apostolic Epistle may have been lost (1 Cor. v. 9; 3 John 9), why may not a word or two of an extant Epistle have been lost? And is it quite natural that there should sometimes be a doubt as to *which* of several existing readings is the original, and yet quite inconceivable that there should ever be a doubt as to whether *any* of them is original? In either case we are left in uncertainty as to the precise words which are inspired; and we are thus confronted with the perplexing result that the Almighty has specially guided a writer to use certain words and phrases, to the exclusion of all others, and yet from very early times has, in not a few cases, allowed Christians to be in doubt as to what these exact words and phrases are. Have we any right to assume that there was this special Divine care to produce a particular wording, when it is quite manifest that there has not been special Divine care to preserve a particular wording?

The theory of verbal inspiration imports unnecessary and insuperable difficulties into the already sufficiently difficult problem as to the properties of inspired writings. It maintains that "the line can never rationally be drawn between the thoughts and words of Scripture;" which means that the only inspired Word of God is the original Hebrew and Greek wording which was used by the authors of the different

books in the Bible. Consequently all who cannot read these are cut off from the inspired Word; for the inspired thoughts are, according to this theory, inseparably bound up with the original form of words. But if it is the thought, and not the wording, that is inspired, then the inspired thought may be as adequately expressed in English or German as in Hebrew or Greek. It is the inspired thought, no matter in what language expressed, which comes home to the hearts and consciences of men, and convinces them that what is thus brought to them by a human instrument is indeed in its origin and in its power Divine. "Never *man* thus spake" was said, not of the choice language that was used, but of the meaning which the language conveyed.

In the passage before us there are several points which call for attention, most of which are independent of the differences of reading.

It may be doubted whether the participle (εἰδότας) is rightly rendered "*though* ye know all things once for all." It makes good, and perhaps better sense to understand it in the equally possible signification of "*because* ye know all things once for all." Their being already in full possession of a knowledge of Old Testament history is the reason why St. Jude need do no more than remind them of one or two particulars which throw a terrible light upon the position of those whose conduct is being discussed. That "once" here does not mean "formerly," as the Authorized Version takes it, "though ye *once knew* this," is manifest to every one who knows the meaning of the participle and adverb here used (εἰδότας ἅπαξ). Nor is there much doubt that both here and in ver. 3 it does mean "once for all." This Greek adverb, like its Latin equivalent

semel, is sometimes "used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition." It is twice so used in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "For as touching those who were *once* enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift" (vi. 4); *i.e.* once for all enlightened, so that no second enlightenment is possible. And again, "Because the worshippers, having been *once* cleansed, would have had no more conscience of sins" (x. 2). So also in 1 Peter: "Because Christ also died for sins *once*" (iii. 18). The meaning is similar in both the passages here (vv. 3 and 5). The Gospel was once for all delivered by the Apostles to the Church; for there can be no second Gospel. And this Gospel Christians receive and know once for all.

Doubt has been raised as to the event or events to which St. Jude refers in the words "afterward destroyed them that believed not." Hofmann, Schott, and others, adopting the best-attested reading, "*Jesus*, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not," interpret the latter clause of the destruction of Jerusalem or of the overthrow of the Jewish nation. It is felt that this makes a very unnatural contrast with the deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh by the hand of Moses, and therefore "saved a people out of the land of Egypt" has to be interpreted to mean "the redemption from the bondage-house of the Law and of sin wrought in Israel and for Israel by Christ's act of salvation" (Schott, Erlangen, 1863, p. 225). This is very forced and improbable. Let us hold by Hooker's "most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst" (*Eccl. Pol.* V. lix. 2). The literal construction of "saved a people

out of the land of Egypt" will certainly stand here, and the words must be understood of the passage of the Red Sea and all that accompanied that event. This is the clause of which the meaning is plain, and it must be the interpreter of the clause of which the meaning is less plain: to work backwards from the latter is singularly unreasonable. The "saving" being understood of the deliverance of the Israelites from the tyranny of Pharaoh, the "destroying" is most naturally understood of the overthrow of these same Israelites in the wilderness; not of any one catastrophe, such as followed the matter of Korah (Num. xvi. 49) or of Baal-peor (xxv.), but of the gradual destruction, during the forty years of wandering, of the rebellious and unbelieving, "whose carcases fell in the wilderness. And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in *because of unbelief*" (Heb. iii. 17-19). It is quite unnecessary to add to this, with Fronmüller, the Babylonish captivity, as if "afterward" or "the second time" (τὸ δεύτερον) referred to *two destructions*. It refers to two Divine acts—one of mercy, and a second of judgment.

"And angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, He hath kept in everlasting bonds." This is St. Jude's second instance of God's vengeance upon gross sin, and this and the next are common to both Epistles. For the destruction of the unbelieving Israelites 2 Peter has the Deluge. The Revised Version has several improvements here. It substitutes "principality" for "first estate," in harmony with other passages, where the same word occurs (Rom. viii. 38; Eph. iii. 10; vi. 12; Col. i. 16; ii. 10, 15), and inserts "own"—"their *own* principality"

(τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχήν); thereby marking the difference between "own" and "proper"—"their *proper* habitation" (τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον). Above all, it preserves St. Jude's irony in the double use of the word "kept" (τηρεῖν): "angels which *kept* not their own principality . . . He hath *kept* in everlasting bonds;" which is destroyed in the Authorized Version by the substitution of "reserved" for the second "kept." The alteration of "chains" into "bonds" is of less moment; but it is worth while marking the difference between two Greek words (ἅλυσις and δεσμός), both of which are frequent in the New Testament, and of which the former is always used in a literal sense (Mark v. 3, 4; Luke viii. 29; Acts xii. 6, 7; etc.), and the other sometimes literally (Luke viii. 29; Acts xvi. 26; xxiii. 29; etc.), and sometimes metaphorically (Mark vii. 35; Luke xiii. 16; Philem. 13). It is the latter which is used here.

It may be regarded as certain that this passage does not refer to the original rebellion of the angels, and their fall from being heavenly powers to being spirits of evil and of darkness. Nor is it a *direct* reference to the Rabbinic interpretation of "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose" (Gen. vi. 2, where the best texts of the Septuagint have "angels of God" for "sons of God"). Much more probably it is a reference to a topic which is very prominent in the *Book of Enoch*, which, however, in this particular is based upon the common interpretation of the passage in Genesis. A discussion of this most interesting and perplexing writing is reserved for a later chapter. At present it suffices to say that the work is a composite one, written at different times and by different authors,

and that the allusions to it here, and the quotation from it in vv. 14 and 15, are from the first portion of the *Book of Enoch* (chapters i.—xxxvi.), which, together with the last portion (chapters lxxii.—cv.), may safely be considered as the original writing, and undoubtedly pre-Christian. Whether any of the book was composed in the Christian era is doubtful, and that any of it was written by a Christian is very doubtful indeed. Hofmann, Philippi, and Weisse have not succeeded in persuading many people that the whole work is of Christian origin. The portion of which St. Jude makes use may, with a good deal of probability, be assigned to the latter part of the second century before Christ. A sketch of the section respecting the sin of the angels will throw much light on the passage before us. A portion of it had long been known through two considerable extracts, which the Byzantine writer Georgius Syncellus (*c.* A.D. 800) makes from it in his *Chronographia* (pp. 20-23 and 40-42, Dindorf's ed., Bonn, 1829). The quotation in our Epistle and those made by Syncellus constituted all that was known of the *Book of Enoch* in Europe until 1773, when the English traveller Bruce brought home three MSS. of an Ethiopic version of the whole which was still extant in the Abyssinian Church.

The section about the sin of the angels and their punishment (vii.—xxxvi.) begins very abruptly after a short introduction (i.—vi.), in which Enoch blesses the righteous, and states that he received a revelation from the angels in heaven. "And it came to pass, when the sons of men had multiplied, that daughters were born to them, very beautiful. And the angels, the sons of heaven, desired them, and were led astray after them, and said to one another, Let us choose

for ourselves wives of the daughters of the men of the earth." Two hundred of them then made a conspiracy, and went down to the earth, and begat an offspring of giants. They imparted a knowledge of sorcery and many baneful arts; and the corruption thus diffused, and the voracity and violence of their offspring, produced the evils which preceded the Deluge. Then the sinful angels are sentenced by the Almighty, and Enoch is commissioned to make the sentence known to them. "Then the Lord said to me, Enoch, scribe of righteousness, go tell the watchers of heaven, *who have deserted the lofty sky, and their holy everlasting station*, who have been polluted with women, . . . that on earth they shall never obtain peace and remission of sin." The fallen angels persuade Enoch to intercede for them; but his intercession is not heard, and he is told to repeat the sentence which has been pronounced upon them. The following particulars of their punishment are of interest. Azâzêl (comp. Lev. xvi. 26, R.V.), one of the ringleaders, is to be *bound hand and foot*, thrown into a pit in the wilderness, and *covered with darkness;* there he is to remain, with his face covered, *till the great day of judgment*, when he is to be cast into the fire. The others, after they have seen their offspring kill one another in mutual slaughter, are to be *bound for seventy generations underneath the earth, till the day of their judgment*, when they shall be thrown into the lowest depths of the fire, and be *shut up for ever* (x. 6-9, 15, 16). "Judgment has been passed upon you: your prayer shall not be granted you. From henceforth never shall you ascend to heaven. He hath said that on the earth *He will bind you, as long as the world endures*" (xiv. 2). And Enoch is afterwards shown their punishment in a vision. "These are those of

the stars which have transgressed the commandment of the most high God, and *are here bound, until the infinite number of the days of their crimes be completed.* . . . Why art thou alarmed and amazed at this terrific place, at the sight of this place of suffering? This is *the prison of the angels; and here are they kept for ever*" (xxi. 3, 6).

It is specially worthy of remark that it is in these older portions of the *Book of Enoch* that we meet for the first time in Jewish literature with the distinct conception of a general judgment. The idea is very frequent, and is expressed in a great variety of ways. Thus, what St. Jude calls "the Judgment of the Great Day" (*κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας*), a phrase which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, is called in the *Book of Enoch* "the Great Day of Judgment" (x. 9), "the Day of the Great Judgment" (xciii. 8; xcvii. 15; civ. 3), "the Day of the Great Trouble" (xcix. 5), "the Great Day" (xvi. 2); "the Great Judgment" (xxii. 5), "the General Judgment" (xxii. 9).[1] St. Jude of course need not have derived this idea from the *Book of Enoch;* but the fact that it is so very frequent there, especially in connexion with the sin of the impure angels, may have influenced him in writing the passage before us. At any rate all these numerous details will not leave us in much doubt as to the origin of St. Jude's statement, "angels which

[1] Stanton, *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah* (T. and T. Clark, 1886), pp. 139, 140. He seems, however, to be mistaken in saying that "the Judge is not the Messiah," but Jehovah. As in Scripture, *both* are represented as judging. "Then the Lord of the spirits made to sit upon the throne of His glory the Elect One, who shall judge all the works of the holy. . . . And when He shall lift up His countenance to judge their secret way in the word of the Name of the Lord of spirits," etc. (lx. 12. 10. Comp. John v. 22).

kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." It comes either directly from the *Book of Enoch*, or from a source of which both the writer of the book and St. Jude make use.

It was "in like manner with these" angels that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah sinned, going astray after unlawful and unnatural indulgences; and "in like manner with these" angels, they also "are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." The meaning is not quite clear, but apparently it is this, that the sinful angels are in prison awaiting the day of judgment, when they will be cast into the lake of fire; and that the destruction of the cities of the plain by fire, and their perpetual submersion, are an example of the eternal fire in which the angels will be submerged. Perhaps there is also the idea that under the Dead Sea volcanic fires are burning. It is quite possible to take "of eternal fire" after "example" instead of after "punishment;" and this rendering makes the statement more in accordance with the actual facts: "are set forth as an example of eternal fire, suffering punishment." But the two last words come in rather awkwardly at the end of the sentence, and most commentators decide against this construction (comp. 3 Macc. ii. 5).

The three cases exhibit, not a climax, but great diversity, as regards persons, sin, and punishment. We have both Jews and Gentiles, and between them beings superior to both. The Israelites by unbelief rejected their promised home, and perished slowly in the wilderness. The angels left their proper home, sinned grossly, and are in banishment and in prison,

awaiting still worse punishment. The men of Sodom and Gomorrah sinned grossly in their home, and both they and it were suddenly, horribly, and irrevocably destroyed. This great diversity gives point to the moral. No matter who may be the sinners, or what the circumstances of the sin, outrageous offences, such as impurity and rebellion, are certain of Divine chastisement.

If fallen angels are evil spirits actively compassing the ruin of souls, how can fallen angels be "kept in everlasting bonds unto the judgment of the great day"? More than one answer might be given to this question, but the reserve of Scripture on the subject seems to warn us from unprofitable speculation. Even without Scripture the reality of spiritual powers of evil may be inferred from their effects. Scripture seems to tell us that some of these powers are personal, and some not, that some are more free than others, and that all shall be defeated at last. That is enough for our comfort, warning, and assurance. It consoles us to know that much of the evil within us is no part of ourselves, but comes from without. It makes us wary to know that such powers are contending against us. It gives us confidence to know that even Satan and his hosts can be overcome by those who resist steadfast in the faith.[1]

[1] On the fall of the angels see Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* I. iv. 3, and V. Appendix i. 28.

For a modern and poetical rendering of what is stated in Gen. vi. 1, 2, see Byron, *Heaven and Earth: a Mystery.*

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RAILING AT DIGNITIES. "THE ASSUMPTION OF MOSES." ST. JUDE'S USE OF APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE.

"Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities. But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment,[1] but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these rail at whatsoever things they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed. Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah."—ST. JUDE 8-12.

ST. JUDE having given three terrible examples of the punishment of gross sin in Jews, Gentiles, and angels, proceeds to apply these instances to the libertines who in his own day, by their scandalous conduct

[1] Dr. Field, in his most valuable *Otium Novicense* (iii., pp. 154, 155), argues strongly in favour of translating κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας, "bring against him an accusation of blasphemy;" and he quotes various passages to show that κρίσιν ἐπιφέρειν may mean "to bring an accusation against." But none of them have a genitive after the κρίσιν, and the question still remains whether the genitive is descriptive and may be treated as an adjective, or expresses the subject-matter of the κρίσις. That the former is right seems to be shown by the context (βλασφημοῦσιν in vv. 8 and 10); the libertines do to higher beings what an archangel did not dare to do to Satan; and also by the parallel in 2 Peter ii. 11 (βλάσφημον κρίσιν). And on what grounds would Michael not dare to charge Satan with blasphemy? That he did not dare to rail at him is intelligible.

as Christians, were provoking God to punish them in like manner; and the threefold description of their conduct here given seems to refer to the three instances just given, which are now taken in reverse order. Like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, these ungodly libertines "defile the flesh;" like the "angels which kept not their own principality," they "set at nought dominion;" and like the unbelieving and rebellious Israelites in the wilderness, they "rail at dignities." In all three particulars they show themselves as "dreamers" (*ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι*). They are like men who say and do monstrous things in their sleep. They are deadened to all sense of decency and duty, "dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber" (Isa. lvi. 10, where the same word that we have here is used in the LXX.). They are sunk in the torpor of sin (Rom. xiii. 11). The Revisers have done rightly in omitting the epithet "filthy," in adding the word "also," and in substituting "in their dreamings" for "dreamers." The participle represented by "in their dreamings" does not belong to "defile the flesh" exclusively, but to the other two clauses as well; so that "filthy" is not even correct as an interpretation: it is quite unjustifiable as a rendering. There is no reason for suspecting that certain Levitical pollutions are indicated. Seeing that "in their dreamings" they "set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities," dreaming must not be understood of actual sleep. Moreover, St. Jude does not say "defile *their* flesh," but "defile the flesh" (*σάρκα μιαίνουσι*), which includes more than their own bodies. He perhaps means that they pollute human nature, or even the whole animal world.

Like the men of Sodom, these profligates "defile the flesh." Like the angels who sold their birthright for

base indulgences, they "set at nought dominion." But it is by no means easy to determine what this "dominion" or "lordship" (κυριότητα) signifies. Calvin and others interpret this and "dignities" or "glories" (δόξας) of the civil power: "There is a contrast to be noticed, when he says that they defiled or polluted the flesh, that is, that they degraded what was less excellent, and that yet they despised as disgraceful what is deemed especially excellent among mankind. It appears from the second clause that they were seditious men, who sought anarchy, that, being loosed from the fear of the laws, they might sin more freely. But these two things are nearly always connected, that they who abandon themselves to iniquity do also wish to abolish all order. Though, indeed, their chief object is to be free from every yoke, it yet appears from the words of Jude that they were wont to speak insolently and reproachfully of magistrates, like the fanatics of the present day, who not only grumble because they are restrained by the authority of magistrates, but furiously declaim against all government, and say that the power of the sword is profane and opposed to godliness; in short, they superciliously reject from the Church of God all kings and all magistrates. 'Dignities,' or 'glories,' are orders or ranks eminent in power or honour" (Calvin's *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, Eng. Tr., Edinburgh, 1855, p. 438). But if earthly rulers of any kind are meant by "dominion" and "dignities," it is more probable that St. Jude is thinking of ecclesiastical officers; in which case the meaning would be that these libertines set Church discipline at defiance, and reviled the presbyters or bishops who rebuked them for their evil conduct.

It is, however, more probable that at least "dominion," if not "dignities," refers to unseen and supernatural powers. We must look backwards to ver. 4, and forwards to ver. 10, for a key to the interpretation. These profligates "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness," and thus "defile the flesh;" and they "deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ," and thus "set at nought lordship." Again, "what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed," *i.e.* they ruin themselves, body and soul, by their carnal indulgences; while "they rail at whatsoever things they know not," *i.e.* they speak with flippant irreverence respecting the invisible world, reviling angels, and perhaps mocking at Satan. We may, therefore, with some hesitation, but with a fair amount of reason, interpret "dominion," or "lordship," of Christ or of God, and "dignities," or "glories," of angels, remembering that either or both of these may include Christ's ministers and messengers on earth. One of the ways in which these ungodly men denied Christ in their lives was by their contemptuous disregard of the teaching of His Apostles.[1]

It is quite possible that in this particular also St. Jude is under the influence of the *Book of Enoch*. In it we

[1] The variety of interpretation as regards these two expressions is remarkable. Some, as Beza, Calvin, Erasmus, and Grotius, interpret both "dominion" and "dignities" of civil magistrates; others, as Hammond, include ecclesiastical rulers; others, as Lumby, interpret both of Apostles and elders, and through them Christ; others, as Ritsch, apply "dominion" to God or Christ, and "dignities" to good angels. Wiesinger and Huther apply "dominion" to God or Christ, and "dignities" to bad angels. Alford, Bengel, Brückner, and De Wette explain both of good angels; while Schott apparently explains both of bad angels. Œcumenius is not quite alone in suggesting that "dignities" may mean the Old and New Testament; Plumptre would make the word include both good and bad angels.

read, "Ye fulfil not the commandments of the Lord; but ye transgress and *calumniate greatness*" (vi. 4); and again, "All who *utter with their mouths unbecoming language against God*, and *speak harsh things of His glory*, here they shall be collected" (xxvi. 2); and again, "My eyes beheld all the sinners, who *denied the Lord of glory*" (xli. 1). And with this last expression should be compared, "*The splendour of the Godhead* shall illuminate them" (i. 8). But of course it does not follow that because St. Jude partly reproduces the language of this writer, therefore he uses it with precisely the same meaning.

"But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." The meaning of this illustration is obvious. The profane libertines allow themselves to speak of "dignities" in a way which even an archangel did not venture to adopt in rebuking Satan. It is a very strong argument *à fortiori*. Consequently, the fact that it was an evil angel against whom Michael did not dare to rail by no means proves that it was evil angels against which the libertines did dare to rail. Rather the contrary may be inferred. They use language of good angels which Michael would not use of a bad one. That "dignities," or "glories," may include the fallen angels or evil spirits is perhaps possible; that it refers to them exclusively is very improbable. The word itself is against this; for "glories" is certainly a strange name to give to devils.

But a more interesting question lies before us as to the source from which St. Jude derived the story about Michael the archangel contending with the devil about the body of Moses. It is as unreasonable to suppose

that he received a special revelation on the subject as to suppose that St. Paul received a special revelation respecting the names of the Egyptian magicians (see on 2 Tim. iii. 8 in this series, *Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 379-83). St. Jude refers to the incident as something quite familiar to his readers; and this could hardly have been the case if it had been specially revealed to himself. Lardner supposes that the reference is to Zech. ii. 1, 2. But, excepting that the words, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan," occur there, the difference between the two incidents is immense. Neither Michael nor the body of Moses is mentioned in Zechariah. The cause of Satan's hostility is the consecration of Joshua the high priest. And it is the Lord, and not the angel, who rebukes the evil one. These differences are conclusive; they leave just the features which need explanation still unexplained. We may safely decide that St. Jude is not alluding to anything contained in the Bible. More probably he is referring to some well-known Jewish story respecting the death and burial of Moses —in other words, to apocryphal literature.

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6). These words excited the curiosity of the Jews; and as history told them nothing beyond the statement in Deuteronomy, they fell back upon imagination as a substitute, and the mysterious words of Scripture became a centre round which a series of legends in process of time clustered. The *Targum of Jonathan* on the passage says that the grave of Moses was entrusted to the care of Michael the archangel. The *Midrash* on the same states that

Sammael, chief of the evil spirits, was impatient for the death of Moses. "And he said, When will the longed-for moment come when Michael shall weep and I shall laugh? And at last the time came when Michael came to Sammael and said: Ah! cursed one! shall I weep while thou laughest? and he made answer in the words of Micah (vii. 8), Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." The *Midrash* also contains another legend, in which the sin of the impure angels is mentioned in connexion with the death of Moses. The soul of Moses prays that it may not be taken from the body: "Lord of the world, the angels Asa and Asael lusted after daughters of men; but Moses, from the day that Thou appearedst unto him in the bush, led a life of perpetual continence;" the plea being that from so pure a body the soul need not depart. Both Gabriel and Michael shrink from bringing the soul, and Sammael failed to obtain it. "And Moses prayed, Lord of the world, give not my soul over to the angel of death. And there came a voice from heaven, Fear not, Moses; I will provide for thy burial. And Moses stood up and sanctified himself as do the Seraphim, and the Most High came down from heaven, and the three chief angels with Him. Michael prepared the bier, and Gabriel spread out the winding-sheet. . . . And the Most High kissed him, and through that kiss took his soul to Himself" (Plumptre *in loco*).

These legends bring us a little nearer to the illustration used by St. Jude, for they bring Michael and the evil spirit into connexion with what is related respecting the death and burial of Moses. But the contest between Michael and Satan respecting the body is not there. Origen tells us that this comes from an apocryphal book

called *The Assumption* or *The Ascension* (*ἀνάληψις* or *ἀνάβασις*) *of Moses*: "In Genesis the serpent is described as having seduced Eve, regarding whom, in *The Assumption of Moses* (a little treatise of which the Apostle Jude makes mention in his Epistle), the archangel Michael, when disputing with the devil regarding the body of Moses, says that the serpent, being inspired by the devil, was the cause of the transgression of Adam and Eve" (*De Princip.* III. ii. *sub init.*). The book was fairly well known in the early Church. Clement of Alexandria quotes it (*Strom.* VI. xv. *sub fin.*); and in the Latin translation of the *Hypotyposeis* his note on Jude 9 is "*Hic confirmat Assumptionem Moysis.*" Didymus of Alexandria says the same as Origen about St. Jude's use of it, and censures those who made this an objection to the Epistle of Jude (*In Epist. Judæ enarratio in Gallandi Biblioth. Patr.* VI. 307). Evodius, Bishop of Uzala, one of Augustine's early friends (*Confess.* IX. viii. 17; xii. 31), in writing to him, speaks of it as the *Mysteries* (*Secreta*) *of Moses*, and calls it a writing devoid of authority (Aug. *Ep.* clviii. 6). It was known in the second half of the fifth century to Gelasius of Cyzicus, and in the second half of the eighth to Nicephorus of Constantinople, who, in his *Stichometria Sacrorum Librorum*, tells us that it was about as long as the Apocalypse of St. John. But from that time we hear no more of it until 1861, when Ceriani published about a third of it from a palimpsest in the Ambrosian Library at Milan (*Monumenta Sacra et Prof.* I. i., p. 55). This fragment contains the passage quoted by Gelasius, but most tantalizingly comes to an end before the death of Moses, so that we are still without the passage about the contest between Michael and the devil respecting his body. Nevertheless, we have no reason for doubt-

ing the statements of Origen and of Didymus that the book contained this incident, and that this is the source of the illustration used by St. Jude. Such evidence as we have confirms the statements, and there is no evidence on the other side. We know that there were legends connecting Michael and the evil one with the death of Moses. We know that *The Assumption of Moses* contained similar material. Above all, we know that the incident mentioned by St. Jude is not in the canonical Scriptures, and therefore must have come from some apocryphal source, and that elsewhere in his Epistle St. Jude makes use of apocryphal literature. We are not, therefore, creating a difficulty by adopting the all but certain conclusion that this apocryphal work is the source from which St. Jude draws. Even if we reject this highly probable conclusion, the difficulty, such as it is, will still remain.

That *The Assumption of Moses* was written before our Epistle is almost universally admitted. Philippi is almost alone in thinking that its author was a Christian, and that he borrowed from St. Jude. Ewald, Dillmann, Drummond, Schürer, and Wiesler place it between B.C. 4 (the year of the war of Quintilius Varus, to which it almost certainly refers) and A.D. 6. Hilgenfeld, Merx, Fritzsche, and Lucius place it at different points between A.D. 44 and 70. But the earlier date is the more probable. The large fragment in Latin which we now possess was evidently made from a Greek document, and Hilgenfeld has attempted to restore the Greek from the Latin. But this Greek document may itself have been a translation from the Aramaic. In either case St. Jude would be able to read it.[1]

[1] The Latin fragment has been several times published since Ceriani made it known in 1861; by Hilgenfeld in 1866 and 1876; by

That any true tradition on the subject should have been handed down orally through fifteen centuries, "*without leaving the slightest trace in a single passage in the Old Testament*," is utterly improbable. This hypothesis, and the still more violent supposition of a special revelation made to St. Jude, are devices prompted by a reverent spirit, but thoroughly uncritical and untenable, to avoid the unwelcome conclusion that an inspired writer has quoted legendary material. Have we any right to assume that inspiration raises a writer to the intellectual position of a critical historian, with power to discriminate between legend and fact? St. Jude probably believed the story about the dispute between Michael and Satan to be true; but even if he knew it to be a myth, he might nevertheless readily use it as an illustrative argument, seeing that it was so familiar to his readers. If an inspired writer were living now, would it be quite incredible that he should make use of Dante's *Purgatory*, or Shakespeare's *King Lear?* Inspiration certainly does not preserve those who possess it from imperfect grammar, and we cannot be certain that it preserves them from other imperfections which have nothing to do with the truth that saves souls. Besides which, it may be merely our prejudices which lead us to regard the use of legendary material as an imperfection. Let us reverently examine the features which inspired writings actually present to us, not hastily determine beforehand what properties they *ought* to possess. We not unnaturally fancy that

Volkmar in 1867; Schmidt and Merx in 1868; and by Fritzsche in 1871. A very full summary of literature on the subject is given in Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (T. and T. Clark, 1886), Div. II., vol. iii., pp. 80-83. See also Herzog, Plitt, and Hauck (*Real-Encykl.*, vol. xii. pp. 352, 353).

when the Holy Spirit inspires a person to write for the spiritual instruction of men throughout all ages, He also preserves him from making mistakes as to the authenticity of writings of which he makes use, or at least would preserve him from misleading others on such points; but it does not follow that this natural expectation of ours corresponds with the actual manner of the Spirit's working. "We follow a very unsafe method if we begin by deciding in what way it seems to us most fitting that God should guide His Church, and then try to wrest facts into conformity with our preconceptions."[1]

[1] Salmon, *Introduction to the N.T.*, 4th ed., Murray (1889), p. 528.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE DESCRIPTION CORRESPONDING TO CAIN: THE LIBERTINES AT THE LOVE-FEASTS. THE BOOK OF ENOCH.

"These are they who are [hidden] rocks in your Love-feasts when they feast with you, [shepherds] that without fear feed themselves clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.

"*But* to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." —St. Jude 12-15.

ST. JUDE leaves off comparing the libertines with other sinners—Cain and the Sodomites, Balaam and the impure angels, Korah and the unbelieving Israelites—and begins an independent description of them. Nevertheless, there is reason for believing that he has Cain, Balaam, and Korah in his mind in framing this new account of them. The description falls into three parts, of which this is the first. Each of the three parts begins in the same way: "These are" (*οὗτοί εἰσιν*). And each is balanced by something said on the other side, which is introduced with a "But" (*δέ*). In the case before us the "But" introduces a warning

given prophetically to these libertines by Enoch (vv. 14, 15). In the second case St. Jude quotes a warning given prophetically to his readers by the Apostles (vv. 17, 18). In the third he exhorts his readers himself (vv. 20-23). This threefold division has been rather generally ignored. It is quite obliterated in the Revised Version by the division of the paragraphs, and also by the substitution of an "And" for the first "But:" "*And* to these also Enoch prophesied." The Vulgate is right with *autem* in all three places, followed by Wiclif with "Forsothe" in all three places. Luther is not only right in his rendering of the conjunction with *aber* in all three places, but also in his division of the paragraphs. But since Wiclif all English versions have obscured this threefold description of the ungodly with the three corresponding warnings or exhortations.[1]

"These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you." The difference between this and the parallel passage in 2 Peter is of special interest here; for it looks as if whichever writer used the work of the other remembered the sound rather than the sense. We have here ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις . . . σπιλάδες; but in 2 Peter ii. 13 σπίλοι . . . ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις (with ἀγάπαις as a various reading, probably taken from this passage). It is possible that there may be no difference of meaning between σπιλάδες and σπίλοι. The former, which is St. Jude's word, almost invariably means "rocks," but in an Orphic poem of the fourth century means "spots." The latter, which

[1] Purvey has "But . . . And . . . But." Tyndale, Coverdale, Crammer, and the Genevan Version (following the reading of A) omit the conjunction altogether in the first place. It is the Rhemish Version which first introduces "And" into the first place; yet one might have expected that it, being made direct from the Vulgate, would have been correct in this particular.

is used in 2 Peter ii. 13 and Eph. v. 27, generally means "spots," but sometimes means "rocks." So that "spots" may be the right rendering in both Epistles, and "rocks" may be right in both. More probably, however, we should understand "spots" in 2 Peter, and "rocks" here. The Revised Version inserts "hidden" as an epithet—"*hidden* rocks in your love-feasts"—which is hardly justifiable, because the word seems to mean reefs over which the sea dashes, as distinct from rocks which are wholly covered (so in the *Anthologia Palatina*, ii. 390; and in a fragment of Sophocles the word has the epithet "lofty," ἐφ' ὑψηλαῖς σπιλάδεσσι, and "lofty hidden rocks" would be almost a contradiction in terms). Moreover, "hidden" does not seem to be right even as an interpretation; for these profligates were not at all hidden; they were utterly notorious and scandalous. They made no secret of their misconduct, but gloried in it and defended it. Yet this fact does not make the name "rocks," or "reefs," inappropriate. A reef may be a very dangerous thing, although it is always visible. It may be impossible to avoid going near it; and proximity to such things is always perilous. So also with these ungodly men: St. Jude's readers could not wholly avoid them, either in society or in the public services of the Church, but their presence disturbed and polluted both. The whole purpose of the love-feasts was wrecked by these men. Like Cain, they turned the ordinances of religion into selfishness and sin.

We cannot doubt that when St. Jude wrote the eucharist was still part of the agape or love-feast, as when St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (A.D. 57, 58). It was still "the Lord's *Supper*," not merely in name, but in fact (1 Cor. xi. 17-34; Acts xx. 7-11). It is

almost certain that when Ignatius wrote his Epistles (*c.* A.D. 112) the eucharist was still united with the love-feast. He writes to the Church of Smyrna, "It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to hold a love-feast" (viii.). This must refer to the two sacraments, the administration of which are the chief functions of the priestly office. Ignatius cannot have meant that a love-feast apart from the eucharist might not be held without the bishop. When Justin Martyr wrote his First Apology (*c.* A.D. 140) it is evident that the two had been separated; his description of the eucharist (lxv.—lxvii.) implies that no love-feast accompanied it (see Lightfoot, *St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp*, I., pp. 52, 387; II., p. 312: Macmillan, 1885). We may regard it, therefore, as certain that even if this Epistle be placed late in the first century, St. Jude is here referring to a state of things very similar to that which St. Paul rebukes in the Church of Corinth; the love-feast accompanied by the eucharist was profaned by the shameless indulgence of these libertines.

The love-feast symbolized the brotherhood of Christians. It was a simple meal, in which all met as equals, and the rich supplied the necessities of the poor. Anything like excess was peculiarly out of place, and it was the duty of the rich to see that the poorer members of the congregation were satisfied. But it would seem as if these profligates (1) brought with them luxurious food, thus destroying the Christian simplicity of the meal; and (2) brought this, not for the benefit of all, but for their own private enjoyment, thus destroying the idea of Christian brotherhood and equality. There is nothing in the word used for "feasting with you" (*συνευωχούμενοι*) which necessarily implies revelry or excess, but in this connexion

it implies censure. To turn the love-feast into a banquet was wrong, however innocent a banquet might be in itself. We might translate the word "when they feast *together*," instead of "when they feast *with you*;" and this would imply that at the love-feast they kept to themselves, and did not mix with their poorer brethren. This makes good sense; but if this translation is adopted, we must beware of interpreting it to mean that these libertines had become schismatics, and had set up a love-feast of their own. They could not be "rocks in your love-feasts" if they did not attend the love-feasts.

There are two other uncertainties in these opening clauses—one of construction, and one of translation. (1) Ought we to take "without fear" with what precedes, or with what follows—"when they feast with you without fear," or "that feed themselves without fear"? As in ver. 7, with regard to "of eternal fire," we are unable to decide with certainty. Both constructions make excellent sense, and nothing can be urged as being strongly in favour of either. English versions are divided. The Rhemish has "feasting together without fear." Purvey, the Authorized, and the Revised take "without fear" with "feeding themselves." Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan aim at being as ambiguous as the Greek; they place "with out feare" between the two clauses with a comma on each side of it. (2) Does "feeding themselves" mean that they fed themselves *instead of feeding the flock?* (Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 8; Isa. lvi. 11). If so, the Revisers give the right interpretation with "shepherds that without fear feed themselves;" but this is interpretation rather than translation. Or does it mean that they fed themselves, *instead of waiting to be fed by the shepherds?* If so, it

is quite misleading to call them shepherds. As we have seen already (p. 390), there is no reason for thinking that these profligates set up as teachers or pastors. We shall be safer if we render the Greek participle (ἑαυτοὺς ποιμαίνοντες) by a participle: "pasturing themselves," or "shepherding themselves." Lucifer, as Dr. Salmon points out, renders it *semetipsos regentes*, which shows that he understood it in the latter sense. Yet this second view does not imply anything schismatical in their conduct, but merely that they were selfish and disorderly. They kept their own good food, and consumed it among themselves at the love-feast, instead of throwing it into the common store, and allowing it to be distributed to all by the elders. With full recognition of the fact that there is much to be said for other views, the following rendering may be accepted as on the whole preferable: "These are they who are rocks in your love-feasts, feasting together without fear, pasturing their own selves."

In what follows St. Jude piles metaphor on metaphor and epithet on epithet, in the effort to express his indignation and abhorrence. But we cannot say that "no doubt also in the comparisons which he employs he has an eye to the original intention of the love-feast." It is somewhat forced to say that the love-feast "was to have the blessing of the rain from heaven; it was meant to be a cause of much fruit in the whole Christian community." But assuming that "waterless clouds" and "fruitless trees" may be made to refer to the love-feasts, what are we to make of "wild waves" and "wandering stars" in that connexion? It is better to regard the subject of the love-feasts as ended, and to take the similes which follow as quite independent. These men are ostentatious, but they do

no good. It was perhaps expected that their admission to the Church would be a great gain to Christendom; but they are as disappointing as clouds that are carried *past* (*παραφερόμεναι*) by winds without giving any rain; and in the East that is one of the most grievous among common disappointments.

How the framers of the Authorized Version came to perpetrate such a contradiction in terms as "trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit," it is not easy to see. No earlier English version is guilty of it; nor the Vulgate (*arbores autumnales, infructuosæ*); nor Beza, with whom Calvin agrees (*arbores emarcidæ, infrugiferæ*); nor Luther (*kahle unfruchtbare Bäume*). The Greek (*δένδρα φθινοπωρινά*) means literally "autumn-withering trees;" *i.e.* just at the time when fruit is expected they wither and are without fruit. The parable of the barren fig-tree (Luke xiii. 6-9) is perhaps in St. Jude's mind. The epithets form a natural climax—withering in autumn, fruitless, twice dead, rooted up. These profligates were twice dead, because they had returned after baptism to the death of sin: the end of such men is that they shall be rooted out at the last (Ps. xxx. 28; lii. 5; Prov. ii. 22). When he calls them "wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shames," St. Jude is perhaps thinking of the words of Isaiah: "The wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt" (lvii. 20). But the wording of the Septuagint is utterly different from that which we have here; it is the thought that is similar.

What are we to understand by "wandering stars"? Not planets, nor comets, neither of which either *seem* to wander while one looks at them, or *do* wander, in St. Jude's sense, as a matter of fact. Both have their

orbits, to which they keep with such regularity that their movements can be accurately predicted; so that they are symbols rather of Christian lives than of the course of the ungodly. Much more probably St. Jude means "falling stars," or "shooting stars," which seem to leave their place in the heavens, where they are beautiful and useful, and to wander away into the darkness, to the confusion and dismay of those who observe them. Thus understood, the simile forms a natural transition to the prophecy of Enoch which follows. St. Jude's thoughts have once more gone back to the fallen angels in the *Book of Enoch*. Angels, like stars, have a path to keep, and those who keep it not are punished. "I saw the winds which cause the orb of the sun and of all the stars to set. . . . I saw the path of the angels. . . . I perceived a place which had neither the firmament of heaven above it, nor the solid ground underneath it; neither was there water above it, nor anything on wing; but the spot was desolate. And there I saw seven stars, like great blazing mountains, and like spirits entreating me. Then the angel [Enoch's guide] said, This place, until the consummation of heaven and earth, will be the prison of the stars and the host of heaven. The stars which roll over fire are those which transgressed the commandment of God" (xviii. 6, 7, 13-16). In another terrible place he sees stars bound together, and is told that these are "the stars which have transgressed," and that "this is the prison of the angels," in which "they are kept for ever" (xxi. 2, 3, 5, 6). These extracts make it highly probable that when St. Jude compares the ungodly to "wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever," he is thinking once more of the "angels which left

their proper habitation," who are "kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (ver. 6). After this return to the ideas contained in the *Book of Enoch*, the quotation of the prophecy comes quite naturally; and all the more so because, as Irenæus indicates, Enoch forms a splendid contrast to the fallen angels: they lost their heavenly habitation by displeasing God, whereas he was taken up to heaven for pleasing Him. His words show that he was acquainted with the *Book of Enoch*, and accepted it as trustworthy: "But Enoch also without circumcision, by pleasing God, although he was a man, discharged the office of ambassador to angels, and was translated, and is preserved even until now as a witness of the just judgment of God: while angels by transgression fell to earth for judgment; but a man by pleasing Him was translated for salvation" (*Hær.* IV. xvi. 2). Having compared the profligates to the stars, or angels, who fell from heaven to earth, St. Jude passes on readily to quote the warning of one who was taken up from earth to heaven.

And the way in which the prophecy is introduced makes us still more clear as to the source from which St. Jude derived it: "Enoch, *the seventh* from Adam, prophesied." Nowhere in the Old Testament, and nowhere else in the New, is Enoch said to be "the seventh from Adam." But he is called "the seventh" in the *Book of Enoch*, where he is made to say, "I have been born the seventh in the first week" (xcii. 4), although in order to make seven both Adam and Enoch have to be counted (xxxvii. 1). The number seven is possibly symbolical, indicating perfection. Thus Dr. Westcott takes Enoch to be "a type of perfected humanity" (*Dict. of the Bible*). Yet it is also possible that he is called

"the seventh" in the *Book of Enoch*, and consequently by St. Jude, in order to mark the extreme antiquity of the prophecy, or to distinguish him from other persons of the same name (Gen. xxv. 4; xlvi. 9).

But a careful comparison of the passage in question, as quoted by St. Jude, and as it stands in the translation of the *Book of Enoch*, is the chief means of determining the source of the quotation. This, however, cannot be made satisfactorily until we can place the Greek, of which the Ethiopic version of the *Book of Enoch* is a translation, side by side with St. Jude's Greek.

ENOCH.	ST. JUDE.
Behold, He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon them, and to destroy the ungodly and reprove all the carnal [or, and will destroy and convict the ungodly with all flesh], for everything which the sinners and the ungodly have done and committed against Him (chap. ii.).	Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, *and of all the hard things which* ungodly sinners *have spoken against Him* (vv. 14, 15).

It will be observed that there is nothing in the *Book of Enoch* to correspond with the saying about "the hard things which sinners have spoken against God." This in itself is almost conclusive against the hypothesis, which on other grounds is not very probable, that some later writer copied the prophecy as given by St. Jude, and inserted it into the *Book of Enoch*. If so, why did he not copy it exactly? Why did he not only slightly vary the wording, but omit a rather important clause? The passage is very short, and a writer who was anxious to make St. Jude agree with the reputed prophecy would be likely to make the agreement exact. On the other hand, if St. Jude is quoting loosely from

memory, or from a Greek or Aramaic original, of which the text varied somewhat from the Ethiopic translation which has come down to us, everything is explained. He would be tenacious of the clause about "hard things spoken against God," as a warning to those who "set at nought dominion and rail at dignities." It is of course possible that both the author of this book and St. Jude independently make use of a traditional saying attributed to Enoch. But seeing that the work was in existence when St. Jude wrote, was probably well known to his readers, and contains most of the passage which he quotes; and seeing that elsewhere in his Epistle he seems to refer to other parts of the book, far the more reasonable view is that he quotes directly from it. The case therefore is parallel to that of the reference to *The Assumption of Moses* in ver. 9. St. Jude probably believed the prophecy to be a genuine prophecy of Enoch, and the writing in which it occurs to be a genuine revelation respecting the visible and invisible world; but even if he knew its apocryphal character, its appositeness to the subject of which he is so full might easily lead him to quote it to persons who would be familiar with it. We have no right to prejudge the question of fitness, and say that inspiration would certainly preserve its instruments from wittingly or unwittingly making use of a fictitious apocalypse. Our business, as reverent and therefore honest students, is to ascertain whether this writer does derive some of his material from the document which, after the lapse of so many centuries, was given back to us about a hundred and twenty years ago. If on critical grounds we find ourselves compelled to believe that this document is the source from which St. Jude draws, then let us beware of setting our own precon-

ceptions above the wisdom of God, who in this case, as in many more, has been pleased to employ an unexpected instrument, and has made a human fiction the means of proclaiming a Divine truth.

It remains to give some further account of the intensely interesting writing which St. Jude appears to have used. The Books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah gave to the Jews a love of visions, revelations, and prophecies which at times was almost insatiable; and, when the gift of prophecy came to an end, the three centuries between Malachi and the Baptist, during which it seemed as if Jehovah had departed from His people, and "answered no more, neither by dreams nor by prophets," appeared dreary and intolerable. What had been written by Moses and the Prophets did not satisfy. Fresh revelations were desired; and the reality being absent, fiction attempted to stop the gap. Such writings as the *Book of Enoch*, *Assumption of Moses*, *Testament of Moses*, *Eldad and Modad*, *Apocalypse of Elijah*, etc., etc., were the result. This desire for prophecies and revelations passed over from Judaism into the Christian Church, and was quickened rather than satisfied by the Revelation of St. John. During the first two centuries of the Christian era such literature continued to be produced by Jews and Christians alike; and specimens of it still survive in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* and the *Fourth Book of Ezra* on the Jewish side, and the *Shepherd of Hermas* on the Christian; the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* being apparently a Jewish original with Christian interpolations. But in most cases only the titles survive, and where the revelation or prophecy is attributed to an Old Testament character we are unable to decide whether the fiction was of Jewish or of Christian origin.

It is strange that such a writing as the *Book of Enoch* should have been allowed to disappear entirely from the West after the fourth century, and from the East after the eighth. The quotations in the *Chronographia* of Georgius Syncellus, some portions of which are not found in the recovered Ethiopic Version, are the last traces that we have of it until early in the seventeenth century, when it was rumoured that it was extant in Abyssinia, and late in the eighteenth, when it was found there. The revelations which it professes to make respecting judgment, heaven, and hell might have been expected to make it a special favourite with Christians from the fourth to the tenth century, during which period one of the commonest topics of speculation was the end of the world. Moreover, there was the passage in Jude, with the notices in Barnabas, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Jerome, and others, to keep the book from being forgotten. But it was generally believed that the end of the world would be heralded by two great signs—the downfall of Rome, and the coming of Antichrist. About these the *Book of Enoch* contains no hint, and the absence of such material may have caused it to pass out of knowledge. Englishmen have the honour of giving it back to Europe. James Bruce brought the Ethiopic translation from Abyssinia in 1773, and Archbishop Laurence published an English translation of it in 1821, and an Ethiopic text in 1838. Since then the scholars who have edited it or commented on it have been almost exclusively Germans.[1]

[1] Hofmann, Gfrörer, Lützelberger, Lücke, Ewald, Köstlin, Hilgenfeld, Weisse, Volkmar, Geiger, Langen, Sieffert, Philippi, Gebhardt, Wieseler, and others, especially Hoffmann and Dillmann, who have published complete translations with notes and explanations. Dill-

It is generally acknowledged that the book is a composite one. Probably the original writer incorporated older materials, and his work has probably been interpolated by later hands. Whether any of these supposed interpolations are Christian is still debated; and the question scarcely admits of a decided answer. On the one hand, there are expressions which would come much more naturally from a Christian than from a Jew; on the other, it is difficult to see why a Christian should insert anything at all, if he did not insert what might teach others Christian truth. Messianic passages abound; and in them the Messiah is called, again and again, "the Son of man" and "the Elect One;" twice He is called "the Anointed" (xlvii. 11; li. 4), twice "the Righteous One" (xxxviii. 2; liii. 6; where Laurence translates otherwise); once He is "the Son of the offspring of the mother of the living," *i.e.* Son of the son of Eve (lxi. 10); and once the Lord speaks of Him as "My Son" (civ. 2). This Messiah is the Judge of men and angels, by the appointment of Jehovah. "In those days will the earth give back that which has been entrusted to it, and Sheol will give back that which has been entrusted to it, which it has received, and destruction (Abaddon) will give

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mann's work (Leipzig, 1853) is still the standard work on the subject, but is out of print. Schodde published an English translation with notes at Andover, 1882; and the English reader will find much information in the articles by Westcott in the *Dict. of the Bible* and by Lipsius in the *Dict. of Chr. Biography;* also in Westcott's *Introduction to the Gospels*, pp. 73, 99-109, 7th ed.; in Schürer's *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II., vol. iii., pp. 54-73; in Stanton's *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah* (T. and T. Clark, 1886), pp. 44-64, 88-95, 139, 140, 170-75, 311-15, 332-35, 347; and in Drummond's *The Jewish Messiah*, 1877, pp. 17-73. Murray's *Enoch Restitutus* (Rivington, 1836) does not seem to be of much value.

back what it owes. . . . And in those days will the Elect One sit upon His throne, and all secrets of wisdom will come forth from the thoughts of His mouth; for the Lord of spirits hath given it to Him, and hath glorified Him" (l. 1, 3). "Then the Lord of spirits made to sit upon the throne of His glory the Elect One, who will judge all the works of the holy" (lx. 10, 11; lxviii. 39). But this Messiah is not much more than a highly exalted angel. He is not the Word; he is not God. That this Son of man has already lived upon the earth is not indicated. Of the name Jesus, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, or the Ascension, there is not a trace. There is no hint of baptism, or of the eucharist, or of the doctrine of the Trinity. In a word, everything distinctly Christian is absent, even from that section (xxxvii.—lxxi.) which makes the nearest approaches to Christian language, and which is probably a later insertion. It is difficult to see what object a Christian could have in writing just this and no more. The fact that so many of the angels have Hebrew names favours the view that the original was in Hebrew or Aramaic, of which the Greek, from which the Ethiopic version is taken, was only a translation. If so, this also is in favour of Jewish, rather than of Christian origin.

Those who can should read the whole book in Laurence's translation, or still better in Dillmann's. But the more accurately translated portions given in Westcott and in Stanton will give some idea of the whole. The latter have been used in this chapter. The book is manifestly the work of a man of the most earnest convictions, one who believes in God, and fears Him, and is appalled at the practical infidelity and utter godlessness which he finds around him. On two

things he is ever insisting: (1) that God's rule extends everywhere, over angels and men, no less than over winds and stars; (2) that this rule is a moral one, for He abundantly rewards righteousness, and fearfully punishes sin. Nothing, therefore, could well be more in harmony with the spirit and purpose of St. Jude, and it ought not to perplex us that he makes use of such a book.

But in any case it may reassure us to remember that, in spite of its being quoted *in* Scripture, the Church has never been allowed to admit it *as* Scripture. The mind of Christendom has never wavered as to the real character of the *Book of Enoch*. It is one of the many eccentricities of Tertullian that he upholds its authority; but his special pleading has misled no one else (*De Cultu Fem.* I. iii.). Justin Martyr apparently knew it (*Apol.* II. v.), but there is nothing to show that he accepted it as a genuine revelation. Origen (*Contra Cels.* V. liv.: comp. *In Numer. Homil.* xxviii. 2; *In Joannem*, tom. vi., cap. xxv.: De la Rue, ii. 384; iv. 142) distinctly marks it as uncanonical and of doubtful value; Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, XV. xxiii. 4) and Jerome (*De Vir. Illustr.* iv.) reject it as apocryphal; and soon after their time it seems to have disappeared from Western Christendom. As already stated, it is uncertain whether St. Jude was mistaken as to the true nature of the book: it is quite certain that the Church has been preserved from being so.

NOTE.—For a collection of parallels between the *Book of Enoch* and 2 Peter and Jude see the *New Testament Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Bishop Ellicott, vol. iii., pp. 518, 519 (Cassells, 1879).

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE DESCRIPTION CORRESPONDING TO BALAAM: IMPIOUS DISCONTENT AND GREED OF THE LIBERTINES. THE APOSTOLIC WARNING RESPECTING THEM.

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

"But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts."—St. Jude 16-18.

THESE words form the second part of the threefold description of the libertines; and just as the first part was balanced by a prophetic warning quoted from the *Book of Enoch*, so this part is balanced by a quotation of the prophetic warning given by the Apostles, to the effect that persons like these ungodly men would certainly arise. This second division more clearly corresponds to the case of Balaam mentioned in ver. 11 than the first division of the description corresponds to the case of Cain. This will appear when we come to examine the details.

"These are murmurers." For the second time St. Jude points to the intruders who are disturbing the Church, and shows his readers another group of characteristics by which these dangerous persons, who disgrace the name of Christian, may be known. This second group

hangs on closely to what immediately precedes. It seems to have been suggested by the last words of the prophecy quoted from Enoch, "the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." The way in which the libertines spoke hard things against God was by murmuring against His decrees and complaining of the dispensations of His Providence. This is the exact meaning of the word which is rendered "complainers" (*μεμψίμοιροι*), and which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; "finding fault with their lot," *i.e.* discontented with the condition of life which God had assigned to them, and not only blaming Him for this, but for the moral restrictions which He had imposed upon them and upon all mankind. Men who "walk after their lusts," and shape their course in accordance with these (*κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι*), cannot be contented, for the means of gratifying the lusts are not always present, and the lusts themselves are insatiable: even when gratification is possible, it is only temporary; the unruly desires are certain to revive and clamour once more for satisfaction. This was notably the case with Balaam, whose grasping cupidity chafed against the restraints which prevented it from being gratified. As Bishop Butler says of him, "He wanted to do what he knew to be very wicked, and contrary to the express command of God; he had inward checks and restraints, which he could not entirely get over; he therefore casts about for ways to reconcile this wickedness with his duty," (*Sermon* vii.). From a somewhat different point of view J. H. Newman says much the same thing of him: Balaam "would have given the world to have got rid of his duties; and the question was, *how* to do so without violence" (*Plain Sermons*, Rivingtons, 1868, vol.

iv., p. 28). Isaac Williams, who has a sermon on the same subject, puts the matter in yet another way. Balaam "knew what was holy and good, and it may be that he loved it also, but he loved riches more: his knowledge was with God; his will was with Satan. . . . He wished to proceed together with God and Mammon—God on his lips, and Mammon in his heart" (*The Characters of the Old Testament*, Rivingtons, 1869, pp. 128, 130). The way in which the libertines seem to have set about the impossible task of getting rid of their duties and reconciling the service of God with the service of Satan appears to have been that of roundly declaring that Christian liberty included freedom to gratify one's desires: if it did not do so, it was an empty delusion. In this way they "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness" (ver. 4), and "their mouth spoke great swelling words." In the parallel passage in 2 Peter an explanation of this kind is given of the "great swelling words." By means of them these evil men "enticed others in the lusts of the flesh by lasciviousness, . . . *promising them liberty*" (2 Peter ii. 18, 19). According to them, it was the magnificent privilege of Christians to be freed from righteousness and become the slaves of sin. Irenæus attributes doctrine of this kind to Simon Magus and his followers, who, "as being free, live as they please; for men are saved through His grace, and not through their own righteous acts. For righteous actions are not such in the nature of things, but accidentally" (*Hær.* I. xxiii. 3).

"Showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage." This, again, is exactly what Balaam did. He had regard to Balak and the princes whom he sent as ambassadors; and he did this because he hoped to

gain the large reward which they were told to promise him if he would but exercise his prophetic power in solemnly cursing Israel. In like manner these blatant profligates, who were loud in their complaints against the treatment which they received from Providence, and equally loud in protesting that the Gospel allowed them and others the licence which they desired, nevertheless became mean flatterers and parasites when there was any chance of getting anything from persons of wealth and distinction. This apparently incongruous combination of arrogant self-assertion with grovelling sycophancy is common enough in men without principle, as Calvin remarks. "When there is no one to check their insolence, or when there is nothing which stands in their way, their pride is intolerable, so that they imperiously arrogate everything to themselves; but they meanly flatter those whom they fear, and from whom they expect some advantage." While they refuse submission where it is due, they give it where it is not due. They rebelliously reject the plain commands of God, and yet servilely cringe to the humours and caprices of their fellow-men.

"But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Revisers have done well to restore the "ye"—"But *ye*, beloved"—which was in all English versions previous to that of 1611, just as in ver. 20. In both cases the pronoun is emphatic, and places the persons addressed in marked contrast to the ungodly men against whom they are being warned. "Whatever they may do, do not you be deceived by their arrogant language and time-serving conduct, for these are the scoffing sensualists against whom

you have already been warned beforehand by the Apostles. Their behaviour is amazing, but it ought not to take you by surprise." St. Jude evidently takes for granted that the Apostolic warning which he quotes is well known to his readers. Such an appeal to the authority of the Apostles would certainly be more natural in one who was himself not an Apostle, but it must not be regarded as quite decisive, as if St. Jude had written "how that they said to *us*." Other reasons, however, support the impression which this passage conveys, that the writer is not an Apostle (see pp. 372, 373). On the other hand, there is nothing in these words to warrant the conclusion that the writer regards the Apostles as persons who lived long ago, or who gave this warning long ago. All that is implied is that before these ungodly men "crept in privily" into the Church, Apostles had foretold that such persons would arise. "In the last time" is not St. Jude's expression, but theirs; and by it the Apostles certainly did not mean an age remote from their own: the "last time" had already begun when they wrote (see on 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, in *The Pastoral Epistles*, in this series, pp. 377, 378; and comp. 1 John ii. 18; Heb. i. 2; 1 Peter i. 20).

"How that they said to you" may mean "how that they *used* to say to you" (ἔλεγον ὑμῖν), and may refer to oral teaching; but we cannot be at all certain of this. Still less can we be certain that, if written warnings are included or specially meant, the reference is to 2 Peter iii. 3: "knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts." Both passages may have a common source, or that in 2 Peter may be modelled upon this one. The word for "mockers" is the same

in both (ἐμπαῖκται), and it is a very unusual word, not used by profane writers, nor anywhere else in the New Testament; in the Septuagint it occurs only once (Isa. iii. 4), and there apparently in the sense of "childish persons." The Authorized Version unfortunately obscures this close connexion between the wording of 2 Peter iii. 3, and that of this passage, by having "scoffers" in the one, and "mockers" in the other. The particular in which the two passages really differ must not pass without notice. St. Jude writes, "walking after their own *ungodly* lusts," or, more literally, "their own lusts *of ungodlinesses*" (τῶν ἀσεβειῶν). Most probably the genitive here is descriptive, as in James i. 24 and ii. 4; and therefore the substitution of the adjective "ungodly" for it in the English versions is justifiable. But it is possible that "lusts of ungodlinesses" means that they lusted after impieties, and therefore the rendering given in the margin of the Revised Version should not be left unheeded. Wiclif, Purvey, and the Rhemish here differ from other English versions, being made from later texts of the Vulgate, which read, "*secundum desideria sua ambulantes in impietatibus* or *in impietate*," whereas the better text has *impietatum*. However we translate the genitive case, we may regard the word as an echo of the prophecy quoted from the *Book of Enoch*, in which "ungodly" or "ungodliness" occurs with persistent iteration (ver. 15).

The fact that this expression (τῶν ἀσεβειῶν) occurs here, but not in the parallel verse in 2 Peter, is an indication of a much more important difference between the two passages. In spite of the great similarity of wording, the meaning is very different. The mockers in each case mock at totally different things. In 2 Peter

we are expressly told that they scoffed at the belief that Christ was coming to judge the world. "What has become of the promise of His coming? Everything goes on just as it has done for generations." There is not a hint of any such notion here; on the contrary, it is implied that these libertines mocked at God's dealings with themselves, and at the belief that the Gospel did not give them full liberty to gratify their sensual desires. They were among those of whom it is written that "fools make a mock at sin" (Prov. xiv. 9). By scoffing at things sacred, and ridiculing the notion that there is any harm in licentiousness, or anything estimable in holiness, they created a moral atmosphere in which men sinned with a light heart, because sin was made to look as if it were a matter of no moment, a thing to be indulged in without anxiety or remorse. It would be more reasonable and less reprehensible to make a mock at carnage or pestilence, and teach men to go with a light heart into a desolating war or plague-stricken neighbourhood. In such cases experience of the manifest horrors would soon cure the light-heartedness. But the horrible nature of sin is not so manifest, and with regard to *that* experience teaches its lesson more slowly. It is like a poisoning of the blood rather than a wound in the flesh, and may have done incalculable mischief before any serious pain is felt, or any grave alarm excited. Hence it is quite easy for many to "walk after their own ungodly lusts," and at the same time "mock at sin" and its consequences. And then the converse of the proverb becomes true, and "sin mocks at the fools" that mocked at it—a meaning which the Hebrew may very well have. In the margin of the Revised Version we read, "Guilt mocketh at the foolish." As Delilah mocked at Samson, so does sin

mock at those who have been taken captive by it. There is no folly equal to the foolhardiness of those who make light, either to themselves or to others, of the deadly character of any form of sin. They thereby save the tempter all trouble, and do his work themselves. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin. He shall die for lack of instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray" (Prov. v. 22, 23).

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DESCRIPTION CORRESPONDING TO KORAH: MAKING SEPARATIONS. EXHORTATION TO THE FAITHFUL TO BUILD UP THEMSELVES, AND THEN RESCUE OTHERS.

"These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."—ST. JUDE 19-23.

FOR the third and last time St. Jude points his finger at the ungodly intruders who are working such mischief in the Church, and gives another triplet of characteristics by which they may be recognized.

"These are they who make separations." This is the first point; like Korah and his company, these men are separatists (*οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες*). They do not actually make a schism *from* the Church, for they frequent the love-feasts and profess membership; but they create a faction *within* it. Even in the public services of the Church they keep aloof from the poorer members of the congregation. At the love-feasts they feed themselves on the good things which they bring with them, instead of handing them over to the ministers to be distributed among all. And in society they care only

for persons of rank and wealth, out of whom they hope to gain something. Worst of all, they claim to be specially enlightened members of the Church, having a more comprehensive knowledge of the nature of Christian liberty, while they are turning the fundamental principles of Christian life upside down. Hence, although they are not actual schismatics, who have gone out of the Church and set up a communion of their own, their tendencies are in that direction. They are, in short, much the same kind of people as those against whom St. Paul warns his readers in the Epistle to the Romans: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them *which are causing the divisions* and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but *their own belly;* and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (xvi. 17, 18). And again in the Epistle to the Philippians: "For many walk of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, *whose god is the belly,* and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (iii. 18, 19). A parallel to nearly every clause in these two descriptions might be found in the account of the libertines given by St. Jude. Indeed, the words in which Bishop Lightfoot sums up St. Paul's description might be adopted verbatim as a summary of the description in our Epistle: "They are described as creating divisions and offences, as holding plausible language, as professing to be wise beyond others, and yet not innocent in their wisdom." They are "Antinomians, who refuse to conform to the Cross, and live a life of self-indulgence." "The unfettered liberty of which they boast,

thus perverted, becomes their deepest degradation" (*Philippians,* Notes on iii. 18, 19).

Hooker, in his sermons on this passage, although he adopts the translation of Tyndale, continued by Cranmer and the Genevan Version, "These are makers of sects," yet in his exposition follows the corrupt reading which misled the translators of 1611, "These be they who separate *themselves*" (*οἱ ἀποδιορίζοντες ἑαυτούς*), "themselves" being absent from almost all the ancient MSS. and versions. He says, "St. Jude, to express the manner of their departure which by apostasy fell away from the faith of Christ, saith, 'They separated themselves;' noting thereby that it was not constraint of others which forced them to depart; it was not infirmity and weakness in themselves, it was not fear of persecution to come upon them, whereat their hearts did fail; it was not grief of torments, whereof they had tasted, and were not able any longer to endure them. No, they voluntarily did separate themselves, with a fully settled and altogether determined purpose never to name the Lord Jesus any more, nor to have any fellowship with His saints, but to bend all their counsel and all their strength to raze out their memorial from amongst them" (*Serm.* v. 11). Here there is a double error in the quotation from St. Jude, and therefore considerable error in the exposition of his meaning. St. Jude does not say that these libertines "separat*ed*," but that they are "those who *are* separat*ing*," *i.e.* are habitually making separations or differences. He uses the present participle, not the aorist or perfect. And, as already noticed, he says nothing about separating *themselves.* So far from implying that they had "a settled and determined purpose never to name the Lord Jesus any more, nor

to have any fellowship with His saints," He shows that these men had crept into the Church, and evidently intended to remain there, attending the love-feasts and polluting them, while they put forward the "freedom wherewith Christ had made them free" as a plea for their own licentiousness; thus "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness," and by their conduct denying the Christ in whom they professed to believe. Thus, though they did not formally leave the Church as heretics, schismatics, or apostates, yet they had the heretical and schismatical temper, and were apostates in their manner of life. As Hooker says elsewhere, "Many things exclude from the kingdom of God, although from the Church they separate not" (*Eccl. Pol.* V. lxviii. 6). These men had left the way of salvation to "walk after their own lusts," but they had not separated from the Church, into which they had surreptitiously obtained admission.

"Sensual" (ψυχικοί). This word has been already discussed in a previous chapter, in the exposition of the passage where it occurs in the Epistle of St. James (iii. 15 : see pp. 200, 201). "Sensual" persons are those who live in the world of sense, and are ruled by human feeling and human reason. They stand not very much above the carnal, and with them are opposed to the spiritual. In the triplet, *carnalis*, *animalis*, *spiritalis*, the second term is far more closely allied with the first than with the third. It is possible that the libertines, in their travesty of the freedom conferred by the Gospel, made a special claim to be "spiritual" persons, who were above the restraints of the moral law. They may have held that to their exalted natures the things of sense were morally indifferent, and might be indulged in without fear of loss or contamination; while they

scoffed at those Christians who were on their guard against such things, and called such Christians *psychical* or sensuous, because they were careful about the things of sense. St. Jude tells them that it is they who are sensuous, and not spiritual at all.

"Not having the Spirit." The Revisers maintain this rendering, which does not appear in English versions until the influence of Beza and the Genevan Version made itself felt. Calvin seems to adopt it; but Luther certainly does not ("*die da keinen Geist haben*"). It must be supposed that the arguments in favour of it are very strong, seeing that the alternative translation is not allowed a place in the margin of either Authorized or Revised Version, nor is recommended by the American Committee. Nevertheless, the points in its favour are well worth considering. This alternative translation is, "Having no spirit" (Tyndale, Cranmer), *i.e.* no spiritual nature. "Not having spirit" is Wiclif's rendering. This agrees very well with the context. St. Jude has just stigmatized the libertines as "sensuous," or "psychical." Of the three elements in man's nature, body, soul, and spirit, they are ruled by the two lower, while the third, which ought to be supreme, is persistently ignored. They had allowed the spiritual part of their being to become so bemired with self-indulgence and self-sufficiency, to be so much under the dominion of human emotion and reason, that it was utterly inoperative and practically non-existent. Their power of spiritual insight into things heavenly, of laying hold of the invisible world, and of entering into communion with God, was gone. The Holy Spirit was not only absent, but His seat was overturned and destroyed. The facts that "spirit" has neither article nor epithet in the Greek, and that the

negative is subjective, and not objective (πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες), are in favour of man's spirit being meant, and of this clause being an explanation of what precedes. These men are sensuous *because* they have lost all spiritual power. It must not, however, be understood that the absence of article and epithet is any barrier to the rendering, "Having not the Spirit." Phil. ii. 1 is proof of that (comp. Eph. ii. 22; vi. 18; Col. i. 8). Nevertheless, such cases are comparatively rare. The usual expression for the Third Person of the Holy Trinity is either "the Spirit," or "Holy Spirit," or "the Holy Spirit," or "the Spirit of God," or "of the Lord," or "of Jesus Christ," or "of truth," or "of life," etc. Therefore, when we find "spirit" without either article, epithet, or distinguishing genitive, the probabilities are that the spirit of man, and not the Spirit of God, is intended.

It will be observed that the three independent descriptions of the libertines, beginning with the words, "These are," become shorter as they go on. The first is two long verses (12, 13); the second is one long verse (16); the third is one very short verse. It is as if the writer were disgusted with the unpalatable subject which necessity had compelled him to take in hand (ver. 3), and were hurrying through it to the more pleasing duty of exhorting those faithful Christians for whose sake he has undertaken this painful task.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." As in ver. 17, the "But *ye*, beloved" (ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί) makes an emphatic contrast between those whom St. Jude addresses and the sensuous and unspiritual men of whom he has been

speaking. He exhorts his readers to endeavour to keep themselves in favour with God by cultivating faith, prayer, and hope; and in this exhortation the main purpose of the letter, as set forth in ver. 3, is fulfilled. The triplet of participles (ἐποικοδομοῦντες—προσευχόμενοι—προσδεχόμενοι) must not be lost sight of, although the fact that the main verb (τηρήσατε) comes in the middle of them, instead of at the end, somewhat obscures the triple construction.

The expression "building up" (ἐποικοδομεῖν) is in the New Testament never used of actual building, but always in the metaphorical sense of believers being united together so as to form a temple. In this temple Christ is sometimes regarded as the foundation (1 Cor. iii. 11), sometimes as that which binds the structure together (Eph. ii. 20; Col. ii. 7). The notion of building *up* comes from the preposition (ἐπί), one stone being placed upon another, so that upward progress is made. "The faith" here is probably the foundation on which the structure is to rest; but it would be possible to translate "*with* your most holy faith," instead of "*on* your most holy faith;" and in that case the dative would, as in Col. ii. 7, express the cement rather than the foundation. In any case "the faith" is not the internal grace or virtue of faith, but, as both the participle and the adjective show, "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (ver. 3). It is "*your* faith," because it has been thus delivered to you; and it is "most holy," in marked contrast to the vile and shifty doctrines which the libertines profess and uphold.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost." This is the best arrangement of the words, although the Greek allows us to take "in the Holy Ghost" with the previous clause, a rather clumsy division of the words, which is

sanctioned by Luther, Beza, and the Rhemish Version: "building yourselves upon our (*sic*) most holy faith, in the Holy Ghost, praying." The expression "praying in the Holy Ghost" occurs nowhere else; but that is no reason why St. Jude should not have used it here. It means that we are to pray in the power and wisdom of the Spirit. In order that we may pray, and pray aright, He must move our hearts and direct our petitions.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God." Not our love of God is meant, but His love of us. This is rendered probable both by what immediately follows—for "the love of God" should have a meaning similar to that of "the mercy of Jesus Christ"—and also by the opening address, "beloved in God" (ver. 1), which St. Jude perhaps has in his mind; for the whole of the verse before us is closely connected with the first verse of the Epistle. God's love is the region in which all Christians should strive to abide, and it is by faith and prayer that this abode is secured. To be conscious of being beloved by God is one of the greatest protections that the believer can possess.

"Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." That mercy which He will show to all faithful Christians when He returns as Judge at the last day. We may compare "looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter iii. 12). Both in this life and in eternity it is mercy that we need and crave. The Psalms are full of this thought, as a reference to the numerous passages in which the word mercy occurs will reveal: see especially Ps. cxxx. And in connexion with this the concise statement respecting the relations of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity to believers must not be overlooked. By prayer in the

power of the Holy Spirit we are kept in the love of the Father through the mercy of the Son. "Unto eternal life." It is not a matter of much moment whether we take these words with "keep yourselves," or with "looking," or with "mercy." The first seems to be the best arrangement, "keep yourselves . . . unto eternal life;" but in any case the eternal life is reached through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. With a similar thought the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 28) writes of Christ's Second Advent as an advent "unto salvation" (*εἰς σωτηρίαν*). The Divine purpose of both Advents is mercy, and not judgment; but seeing that both Advents are met by some who refuse to believe and repent, judgment is inevitable.

"And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear." In hardly any other passage, perhaps, does the Revised Version differ in so many particulars from the Authorized. The main changes are the result of changes in the Greek text, which here is in so corrupt a state that the original cannot be restored with certainty. The readings adopted by the Revisers have the advantage of giving us another triple division, which St. Jude is very likely to have made. This triple division is preserved in the Vulgate, and therefore in Wiclif and the Rhemish Version. Our other translators, with Luther and Beza, not finding it in the inferior Greek MSS. which they used, of course do not give it.[1] With one possible exception, the text adopted by the

[1] Nevertheless, Westcott and Hort reject the triple division, and adopt the text of B, "which involves the incongruity that the first *οὓς* must be taken as a relative, and the first *ἐλεᾶτε* as indicative. Some primitive error evidently affects the passage" (ii., p. 107). It is difficult to believe that their text is right.

Revisers seems to be the best that can be framed with our present evidence. It is doubtful whether we ought not to substitute "convict" (ἐλέγχετε) for the first "have mercy" (ἐλεᾶτε). This reading has very powerful support (AC, the best cursives, Vulgate, Memphitic, Armenian, and Ethiopic), and is adopted by many critics. But it may possibly be an early correction of a still earlier corruption, and not a restoration of the original reading. This is one of those passages about which we must be content to remain in doubt as to what the author actually wrote (see above on ver. 5, p. 404).

In any case the writer is giving directions as to how to deal with two or three different classes of persons, who are in danger of being seduced by the libertines; and possibly the libertines themselves are included. We will assume that three classes are named. In the first we are confronted with an uncertainty of translation. The participle rendered "who are in doubt" (διακρινομένους) may also mean "while they contend" with you. Which meaning we prefer will depend partly upon the reading which we adopt for the imperative which governs the accusative. "On some *have mercy*, when they are in *doubt*," makes very harmonious sense; for earnest doubters, who are unable to make up their minds for or against the truth, are to be treated with great tenderness. Again, "And some *convict*, when they *contend* with you," makes very harmonious sense; for it is those who are disposed to be contentious that need to be refuted and convinced of their error. It is in favour of the latter version of the command that the verbs rendered "convict" and "contend" occur, *and in the same sense*, in the earlier part of the Epistle (vv. 9, 15). In either case that

which is doubted or contended about is "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints," on which believers are to "build themselves up."

The second class are such as can still be rescued, but by strong measures. No hint, however, is given as to their characteristics; we are merely told that there are some who require to be taken with decision, and perhaps even with violence, out of their perilous surroundings, in order that they may be saved from destruction. We may perhaps think of those who, without being in doubt or inclined to dispute about the faith, are being carried away into licentiousness by intercourse with the libertines. The fire out of which they are to be snatched is not the penal fire of the judgment to come, but the state of perdition in which they are now living. We seem to have here, as in ver. 9, a reminiscence of Zechariah iii. 1, where we read, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" In Amos iv. 11 we have the same figure, and the context there agrees with the suggestion just made as to the kind of person indicated by St. Jude: "I have overthrown some among you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a brand plucked out of the burning." There are some who need to be rescued in the way that the angels rescued Lot, with urgency and constraint (Gen. xix. 16, 17); and it is specially in reference to temptations such as Lot had gone into that such urgency is needed.

The third class is one which must be treated with great circumspection: "and on some have mercy *with fear;* hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." This does not mean, as Luther supposes, that we must "let them severely alone, and have nothing to do with them," but that in dealing with evil so insidious and

so infectious, we must take care that we are not contaminated ourselves. It is quite possible to approach evil with good intentions, and then, through want of proper humility and caution, end in finding it fatally attractive. We must carefully preserve abhorrence for all that is associated with pollution. In the *defiled* garment (comp. James iii. 6, where the same word is used) St. Jude appears once more to have Zechariah iii. 1-3 in his mind; but the Greek of the LXX. is there quite different (ἱμάτια ῥυπαρά, instead of ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα). The garment here mentioned is the *chiton*, or shirt, which came in contact with the body, and would itself be rendered unclean if the body were unclean. It therefore serves well as a symbol for that which has become perilous through being closely connected with evil. But while the evil and that which has been contaminated by it are to be hated, compassion is to be shown to those who have fallen victims to it. To be *shown*, not merely *felt*, as is manifest from the word which St. Jude uses (ἐλεᾶν, not οἰκτείρειν). The passages in which this verb (or its more common form ἐλεεῖν) elsewhere occurs in the New Testament prove that it means "to *have* mercy on, to succour and bring help to," and not merely "to *feel* pity for" without doing anything to relieve the person pitied (Matt. ix. 27; xv. 22; xvii. 15; xviii. 33; xx. 30; Mark x. 47; Luke xvi. 24; xvii. 13; xviii. 38; Phil. ii. 27). It is specially used of God's showing mercy to those who do not deserve it (Rom. ix. 15, 16, 18; xi. 32; 1 Cor. vii. 25; 2 Cor. iv. 1; 1 Tim. i. 13, 16; 1 Peter ii. 10), and therefore fitly expresses the sympathy which ought to be manifested by the faithful towards the fallen. But in some cases this sympathy must be manifested *in fear*. It is by acting in the spirit of godly fear that love of the

sinner can be combined with hatred of the sin. Without it sympathy with the sinner is too likely to turn into sympathy with the sin. To put it otherwise: All our efforts for the reformation of others must be begun and continued with self-reformation; and therefore St. Jude insists on the necessity for spiritual progress and prayer, before advising as to the treatment of the fallen. It is while we are earnestly detesting and contending against a particular sin in ourselves that we can most safely and effectually deal with that sin in others.

Finally, it must be noted as specially remarkable that St. Jude, after all the strong language which he has used in describing the wickedness of those who are corrupting the Christian community, does *not*, in this advice as to the different methods which are to be used in dealing with those who are going or have gone astray, recommend denunciation. Not that denunciation is always wrong; in some cases it may be necessary. But denunciation by itself commonly does more harm tha . good; while other methods, which must be added in order to make denunciation effectual, are often quite as efficacious when no denunciation has been employed. It is quite possible to manifest one's abhorrence of "the garment spotted with the flesh," without public or private abuse of those who are the authors of the defilement.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE FINAL DOXOLOGY: PRAISE TO GOD, THE PROTECTOR OF HIS SERVANTS.

"Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore." Amen.—St. Jude 24, 25.

FROM his severe and sombre warnings and exhortations St. Jude turns in joyous and exulting confidence to Him who alone can make them effectual. He has spoken with sternness and horror of great wickedness which has been manifested both in the past and in the present, and of God's terrible judgments upon it. He has exhorted his readers to beware of it, and not to let their abhorrence of it grow less when they are engaged in the merciful work of rescuing others from it. Now, in conclusion, he offers a fervent tribute of praise to Him who is a God of love as well as of justice, and who is as able and ready to protect those who cling to Him and serve Him as to punish those who murmur and rebel against Him.

The doxologies at the end of the Epistle to the Romans and at the beginning of the First Epistle to Timothy should be compared with this one. The former is nearest to it in form; and it is from the doxology in Romans that the epithet "wise," which the Authorized Version

wrongly inserts both here and in 1 Tim. i. 17, probably comes. Doxologies, modelled on those in the New Testament, became elastic in some respects, and stereotyped in others. The formula "to the only wise God" was a common one, and hence scribes inserted the epithet, perhaps almost mechanically, in places where it was not found in the original. It is quite possible that St. Jude knew the Epistle to the Romans, and his doxology, especially in its opening words, may be a conscious or unconscious imitation of it; for the Epistle to the Romans was written some years before the earliest date that can with any probability be assigned to this Epistle.

"To guard you from stumbling;" which in two respects is more than "to keep you from falling." Firstly, "guard" preserves the idea of *protection* against perils, both manifest and secret, more decidedly than "keep;" and secondly, one may have many stumbles without any falls, and therefore to be preserved from even stumbling implies a larger measure of care on the part of the protector. But even "to guard you from stumbling" does not quite do justice to the Greek (φυλάξαι ὑμᾶς ἀπταίστους), nor is it easy to do so. "Guard you so that you are exempt from stumbling and never trip or make a false step" is the full meaning of the expression. The verb which is here negatived is used by St. James (ii. 10): "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble (πταίσῃ) in one point, he is become guilty of all." The Vulgate lets go the metaphor of stumbling, and translates simply "to preserve you without sin" (*conservare sine peccato*). That which is impossible with men is possible with God, and the Divine grace can protect Christians against their own frailty. Christ says of His sheep that they shall

assuredly never perish, and that no one, whether powers of evil or human seducers, can snatch them out of His hand (John x. 28). Their wills are free, and they may will to leave Him; but if they determine to abide with Him they will be safe.

"And to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish." This is the blessed result of His protecting them from stumbling. The revised translation, "without blemish" (*ἀμώμους*), at first sight looks like a needless and vexatious change from the "faultless" of the Authorized Version, and a clumsy one, because it gives two English words for one Greek word. But the change is a real improvement, for the Greek word is a *sacrificial* term, which "faultless" is not. It is frequently used of victims, which must be "without blemish," in order to be suitable for offerings. It is not common in classical Greek, but frequent in the LXX. (Exod. xxix. 1; Lev. i. 3, 10; xxii. 21-24; Num. vi. 14; xix. 2). In 1 Macc. iv. 42 it is used of the priests, and so also in Philo (*De Merc. Mer.* i.; *De Agric.* xxix.: see Lightfoot on *μωμοσκοπηθέν*: Clem. Rom. xli.). In the New Testament it is used sometimes of the sinlessness of Christ (Heb. ix. 14; 1 Peter i. 19), sometimes of the ideal perfection of Christians (Eph. i. 4; v. 27; Phil. ii. 15). In the Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul has almost the same idea as St. Jude—"to *present* you holy and *without blemish* and unreprovable *before Him*" (i. 22); and again in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians—"to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints" (iii. 13). "Before the presence of His glory" refers to the glory of God which shall be revealed at the last day.

"In exceeding joy" is a further consequence from the second point, as the second from the first. To be protected against stumbling leads to being presented without blemish before the judgment-seat, and this is an occasion of intense delight. As St. Peter puts it, "Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy" (1 Peter iv. 13).

"To the only God our Saviour." St. Paul, like St. Jude, speaks of God the Father as our Saviour. He is "an Apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour" (1 Tim. i. 1), and he says that intercession and thanksgiving for others "is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (ii. 3). Still more fully he says that "God our Saviour . . . saved us . . . through Jesus Christ our Saviour (Titus iii. 4-6: comp. i. 3; ii. 10). The work of the Son is the work of the Father; and so in the Old Testament we have Jehovah spoken of as the Saviour and Redeemer of His people (Ps. cvi. 21; Isa. xli. 15, 21; xlix. 26; lx. 16). And this is the meaning of the clause which textual criticism has restored to us in this passage. God is our Saviour "*through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Some take these words with what follows. "To the only God be glory, majesty, dominion and power, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" which makes excellent sense, and is in harmony with the doxology in 1 Peter iv. 11, "that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." It is no strong objection to this to urge that in that case St. Jude would have reversed the order of the clauses (*δόξα μεγαλωσύνη κράτος καὶ ἐξουσία διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν*). In the doxology at the end of the Epistle to the Romans (which St.

Jude *may* have in his mind) "through Jesus Christ" precedes "be the glory," and yet cannot easily be taken with anything else (omitting ᾧ as a probable corruption). The combination "glory and dominion" occurs in other doxologies (1 Peter iv. 11; Rev. i. 6; v. 13); "majesty" and "power" do not occur in any. "Majesty" in the New Testament is found in Hebrews i. 3 and viii. 1 only; but it occurs in the LXX. and in Clement of Rome (xvi. 1). The doxology in 1 Chron. xxix. 11 is specially worthy of notice. The word seems to have been used almost exclusively of the majesty of God, and the four words together sum up the Divine glory and omnipotence. It is a little remarkable that in this case St. Jude abandons his favourite triplets, and gives four attributes rather than three. But he returns in a still more remarkable way to his favourite arrangement in the concluding words.

"Before all time, and now, and for evermore." Thus, in a very comprehensive phrase, eternity is described. Throughout all time, and throughout the ages which precede and follow it, these attributes belong to God. Evil men in their dreamings may "set at nought dominion and rail at glories," and their mouth may "speak great swelling words" about their own superior knowledge and greater liberty, and may mock and scoff at those who will not follow them in "walking after their own ungodly lusts." Nevertheless, ages before they were born, and ages after they shall have vanished from the world which they are troubling by their presence, glory, majesty, dominion, and power belong to Him who saves us, and would save even them, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

They *belong* to Him. This seems to be the mean-

ing rather than that they are *ascribed* to Him. No verb is given in the Greek; neither "is," as in 1 Peter iv. 11 (ᾧ ἐστὶν ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος), nor "be" (ἔστω), which in most doxologies may be understood. "To Him *be* glory *before all time*" is scarcely sense, for our wishes cannot influence the past. "To Him *belongs* glory before all time" is the statement of a simple fact.

It is those who know their own frailty and liability to sin; who know the manifold temptations which surround them, and the terrible attractiveness which many of them can present; who know from past experience what frequent and grievous falls are possible; that can best understand the statement of fact which this doxology contains, and the significance of it. He who can guard such creatures as we are from stumbling, in such a world is this, must be the only God; must be He who was, and is, and is to come; must possess throughout all time and all eternity the highest powers and glories which the heart of man can conceive. The wonders of the material universe impress us in our more solemn moments with feelings of awe, and reverence, and love for Him who is the Author of them all. How much more should the wonders of the kingdom of heaven do so! Out of sinful man to make a saint is more than to make a world out of nothing; and to keep sinful men from stumbling is more than to keep the stars in their courses. There is a free and rebellious will to be won and retained in the one case, whereas there is nothing but absolute and unresisting obedience in the other. The difference is that which is so beautifully expressed in the 103rd and 104th Psalms. In the latter of these two exquisite songs of praise and

thanksgiving Jehovah is praised as the Creator and Regulator of the world, in the former as the Pardoner and Preserver of His servants. In the one case blessing and praise is offered to the Lord—

"Who laid the foundations of the earth,
That it should not be moved for ever.
Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a vesture;
The waters stood above the mountains.
They went up by the mountains,
They went down by the valleys,
Unto the place which Thou hadst founded for them.
Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over;
That they turn not again to cover the earth.
O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!
In wisdom hast Thou made them all:
The earth is full of Thy riches.
Let the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
Let the Lord rejoice in His works:
Who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth;
He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke."
Ps. civ. 5, 6, 8, 9, 24, 31, 32.

But in the other song the Lord is praised, not so much in relation to the glorious universe which He creates and controls, but in relation to the spirits of men, whom He restores, and of angels, whom He retains, to willing obedience and service.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.
He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities.
For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.
As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath He removed our transgressions from us.

Bless the Lord, ye angels of His;
Ye mighty in strength, that fulfil His word,
Hearkening unto the voice of His word,
Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts;
Ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure."
Ps. ciii. 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 20, 21.

It is quite in harmony with such a strain as this that the joyous doxology with which St. Jude's stern letter suddenly ends is written. Its clauses lend themselves to that parallelism which distinguishes Hebrew poetry, and they have not only the spirit, but the form, of a concluding strophe of praise.

"Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling,
And to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy,
To the only God our Saviour,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Glory, majesty, dominion and power,
Before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen."

NOTE.—The "Amen" at the end of this Epistle, as at the end of Romans and 2 Peter, which like this close with a doxology, seems to be genuine (comp. 1 Peter iv. 11; v. 11); but that at the end of 2 Peter is somewhat doubtful. In all other books of the New Testament, excepting Galatians, the final "Amen" is probably spurious.

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THE EPISTLES OF ST. PETER

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PREFACE

THE two letters which bear the name of St. Peter have from the earliest times met with very different degrees of acceptance. The genuineness of the First Epistle is attested by the unanimous voice of primitive Christendom. As it is addressed to Christians dwelling in different parts of Asia Minor, it is natural to look for a knowledge of it in those countries. And nowhere is it earlier noticed. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, a contemporary of the last surviving Apostle, and whose martyrdom took place about the middle of the second century, has repeated quotations from this Epistle. It was known also to Papias († 163), Bishop of Hierapolis, and to Melito (170), Bishop of Sardis. That it was known to the Greeks is seen from the Epistle to Diognetus, which for a long time was attributed to Justin Martyr († 165), while the "Shepherd" of Hermas, written at Rome, testifies that it was known there also at about the same date. The inclusion of it in the Peschito-Syriac Version bears witness to its early circulation in the Eastern Church, as also does its quotation in the writings of Theophilus of Antioch (178). Heretics, no less than the faithful, regarded it as a portion of authoritative Christian literature. Basilides in Alexandria and the Marcosians

and Theodotus in Syria all knew of and cited this Epistle. The Latin Church of Africa accepted it, as we can see from a few quotations in Tertullian († 218) and a greater number in the writings of Cyprian († 258). In the Alexandrian Church it is often quoted by both Clement († 218) and Origen († 254); while for Gaul we have the testimony of the Church of Vienne in the touching letter sent by the Christians there to their "brethren in Asia and Phrygia" (177), and of Irenæus, who was Bishop of Lyons shortly afterwards, and who, coming from Asia to fill that see, is a witness both for the East and the West. From the Christian Church of the early centuries it is hardly possible to produce stronger attestation.

But although so abundantly vouched for in ancient days, the Epistle has not been exempt from the assaults of modern criticism. Primitive Christendom regarded St. Peter, St. John, and St. Paul as heralds of one and the same Gospel, founded on the same promises, strengthened by the same faith. They were at one in what they taught and what they opposed. But some modern thinkers, taking as a thesis that the Gospel as set forth by the Apostle of the circumcision differed widely from the doctrines of St. Paul, have proceeded to make an eclectic Christian literature, out of which the First Epistle of St. Peter has been rejected. Its language is too much in harmony with accepted writings of St. Paul. It can only have been compiled by some later hand to promote the opinion that there was no discord between the teachings of the first Christian preachers. Moreover, it is inconceivable, they consider, that a letter should be addressed by St. Peter to the Christians in those very lands where the missionary labours of St. Paul had been specially exerted,

where the converts were in a peculiar sense his "little children."

Now in this first letter of St. Peter there is unquestionably much that corresponds in tone with the Epistle to the Romans, especially with the twelfth and thirteenth chapters. In both letters Christians are exhorted to offer their bodies as spiritual sacrifices, to shun conformity with the world, to study to be sober in mind, and to use duly all the gifts which they possess; the same unfeigned love of the brethren is inculcated, the same patience under suffering. Christians are not to retaliate, but to overcome evil with good; they are to be in subjection to all lawful authority, and this for conscience' sake, to avoid all excesses, rioting, drunkenness, chambering, and wantonness, and to be ever looking forward to the coming of the Lord.

In like manner there will be found numerous passages in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians which in spirit and tone greatly resemble the words of St. Peter. At the very outset St. Paul addresses his converts as "chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blemish before Him in love"; tells them that they were "foreordained unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise and glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on them in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 3–6). Similarly St. Peter writes to "the elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," and presently he adds that "according to God's great mercy they were begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus

Christ from the dead" (i. 1–3). In both epistles there is the same teaching, the same election in love, the same sonship, the same progress in holiness, the same free gift through Jesus Christ. But in neither is there a word that can be taken to militate against independent authorship. And the same remark applies to all the resemblances which exist between the two epistles in the exhortations to servants, wives, and husbands; in the commendations of humility, pity, courtesy; in the entreaties to the believers to gird up the loins of the mind and to lay aside all malice and hatred; in those passages which speak of them as strangers and pilgrims, as called from darkness to light, as being a spiritual house, built upon Christ as the head corner-stone. Of all these exhortations undoubted parallels are to be found; but they are only evidence of the common character which would pervade all the teaching of the apostolic missionaries where the people addressed were the same, the times not far apart, and the dangers and temptations known alike to all the writers. Hence parallels to St. Peter may be found in St. James too, but they are no proof that the one Apostle (or, as some critics say, some one writing under his name) copied from the other.

Nor is it easy to see reason why St. Peter might not be expected to write a letter to the congregations formed first by St. Paul. No Evangelist or Apostle could publish the message of the Gospel—that is, the life and works—of Christ without telling of His chosen followers; and amongst them, if our Gospels be a true picture, St. Peter must ever have filled a prominent place. The Churches in Asia assuredly had heard much of him, and in a time of persecution or impending trial nothing could be more fit than that the Apostle who had been

most prominent amid Christ's companions should write from Babylon or from Rome, it may be, where the signs of the times would proclaim most clearly the sufferings for which the Christian inhabitants of the provinces should be prepared, to encourage the believers in Asia to steadfastness and to remind them that the same afflictions were being accomplished in their brethren that were elsewhere in the world.

This was likely enough even had St. Peter never visited the districts to which his letter was addressed. But we seem to find traces of him in Corinth (1 Cor. ix. 5; cf. also xv. 5), and he certainly was not unknown by name to the Christians of that city. And if so, why need we question his journeying through Asia Minor? And he was aware of the labours of his fellow-apostle. From personal intercourse and discussion, especially in connexion with the council at Jerusalem, he would be sure that they were of one mind. It may be that he had learnt something of St. Paul's letters to the Churches. Under such circumstances it is not foreign to St. Peter's character, nay rather quite in harmony with it, that he should fulfil the Lord's command to "strengthen the brethren"; that he should send them an earnest assurance that, spite of sufferings and trials, this was the true grace of God, in which they should rejoice to stand.

But there are internal tokens in the Epistle which seem more powerful evidence of its genuineness than anything else. The writer calls himself "Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ"; and he declares his personality by touches and allusions which a forger would never have fabricated. Thus he says, "All of you *gird yourselves* with humility, to serve one another" (v. 5). The verb which he employs here indicates a sort of

girding about with some towel or apron, which a slave put on for doing some menial service. It is almost impossible that the writer had not in his thoughts the act of Christ when He gave His great lesson of humility: "If I have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet."

So, too, the Master's exhortation, "Feed My sheep," "Feed My lambs," comes to mind as we read, "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly" (v. 2). And St. Peter's own words spoken in the house of Cornelius are reproduced when the Father is declared to be One "who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to each man's work" (i. 17).

But it is in the allusions to Christ's passion and resurrection, those events which marked the deep fall and the rising again of St. Peter, that the personality of the Apostle becomes most manifest. He has been himself "a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (v. 1). He can speak as an eye-witness of the Lord's death in the flesh (iii. 18; iv. 1) and His quickening in the spirit; can exhort men to courage because they are partakers of the sufferings of Christ (iv. 13). Who does not feel that the writer of the words, "Let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator" (iv. 19), is thinking of the scene on the cross, of the Saviour's finished work, of the dying cry, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit"?

Perhaps the most striking instance of this peculiarity, this tendency to dwell on the events of the Passion, is found in ii. 19–24. Speaking to servants, he argues, "What glory is it if when ye sin and *are buffeted* for it ye shall take it patiently?" And having used the

word by which the Evangelists describe (Matt. xxvi. 67; Mark xiv. 65) the insults heaped upon the Lord at His trial, the writer is carried away in mind to the whole scene: "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously; in His own self He bare our sins in His own body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed." And in the last clause especially we see traces of one who had been present through the painful history. The word rendered "stripes" means "bruises" or "weals," such as come from savage blows, and is just the word which would occur to one who had seen the bruised body taken down from the cross, but hardly to any one else.

Again, the writer makes you feel without quoting that he has the words of Jesus constantly in his mind. Thus in the exhortation, "Cast all your anxiety upon God, for He careth for you" (v. 7); when he says, "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye" (iv. 14), or "Be sober; be vigilant" (v. 8), or "Be sober unto prayer" (iv. 7), or commends "not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling, but contrariwise blessing" (iii. 9), at each of the sentences—and the letter abounds with examples—there rise in the reader's mind some similar words of Christ, making him feel that he is perusing a writing of one to whom the Lord's language was abundantly familiar.

With the marks of personal character and associations meeting us constantly, and with the unbroken consensus of antiquity in favour of St. Peter's authorship, we shall not lightly allow speculations about hypothetical differences between the teaching of the Apostles

of the Gentiles and of the circumcision to disturb our acceptance of this letter for what it proclaims itself to be: the work of the Apostle St. Peter, of one who was himself a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

Of the Second Epistle the whole history is very different. It appears to have been little known in the early Church, and is included by Eusebius (330) among the *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, "books to which objection was raised" as late as his day. It is true that in Clement of Rome there is a sentence (Ep. i., chap. xi.) which many have accepted as containing a clear allusion to the passage (2 Peter ii. 6, 7) which speaks of Lot and the destruction of Sodom. And if this could be demonstrated with certainty, it would be most valuable testimony. It would prove the Epistle to have been accepted at a very early date and by the important Church in Rome. But we have so far to go before we come upon any other notice that the silence makes us doubtful of the evidence from Clement. Moreover, such other witness as we do find is not of a very direct character. Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, about 256 A.D., in a letter of which a Latin version is preserved among the writings of Cyprian, uses words which probably indicate that he knew both the epistles of St. Peter; but he gives no quotation. The Second Epistle was no doubt meant for the same readers as the First; and that is addressed, among others, to the Christians of Cappadocia, so that there is no improbability in supposing the letter to have been early known there. Theophilus of Antioch (170) uses the comparison of the word to a lamp shining in a dark place in such a way as to give the impression that he knew the Epistle, and a similar possible reference is

found in the writings of Ephrem Syrus († 378). Palladius (400), who was a friend of Chrysostom, and wrote at Rome, makes a clear allusion to 2 Peter; and in the Apology of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, there is a passage concerning the destruction of the world by fire at the last day which is strikingly parallel to 2 Peter iii. 5-7, and can hardly have been written without a knowledge of the Epistle.

This is a very small amount of early evidence, and among the more voluminous writers of the first three centuries we find no mention of the Epistle. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that by Eusebius it is classed among the works of less acceptance. But the same fate befell larger and more important writings than this Epistle. The Apocalypse and the Epistle to the Hebrews stand in the same list in Eusebius. And St. Peter's second letter has not the same general interest as the first, and therefore is likely to have been less widely circulated; and this is all that Eusebius's classification means. The books were not generally received because there was a less general knowledge of their existence and history.

But when the Church entered on the settlement of the New Testament Canon at the Council of Laodicæa (366), the Second Epistle of St. Peter was accepted; and no doubt there was evidence then before the assembled Fathers which time has now destroyed. Yet in the letter itself there are points which no doubt weighed with them, and which are patent to us as they were then. The writer claims to be St. Peter, an Apostle and the writer of a previous epistle. He speaks solemnly of his death as near at hand; and still more solemn, when viewed as evidence, is the declaration that he had been one of the witnesses of

Christ's transfiguration. It is almost inconceivable that a forger, writing to warn against false teachers, writing in the interest of truth, should have thus deliberately assumed a name and experience to which he had no claim. These statements must have influenced the opinion of the Laodicæan Council, and we know that they did not act on light evidence; they did not on the strength of a name accept into their canon, but excluded, works at the time widely circulated and passing for histories or letters of some of the Apostles.

Moreover, when we consider the kind of teaching against which St. Peter's epistle is directed, it is difficult to place it anywhere except at about the same date as St. Paul's epistles. It speaks of the "fables" (μῦθοι, i. 16), the groundless, baseless fancies, of the early heretics in the same manner which we find in St. Paul (cf. 1 Tim. i. 4; iv. 7). The same greed and covetousness (πλεονεξία) is noted by both the Apostles in the teachers against whom their voice is raised (cf. 2 Peter ii. 3; 1 Tim. vi. 5; Titus i. 11). There are the same beguiling promises of liberty (cf. 2 Peter ii. 19; 1 Cor. x. 29; Gal. v. 13), a perversion of the freedom of which St. Paul speaks so much to the Galatian converts; and just as he warns against "false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty" (Gal. ii. 4), so does St. Peter condemn those "who privily bring in heresies of destruction" (2 Peter ii. 1). With so many common features in the two pictures, we can scarcely be wrong in referring them to the same times. No other period in early Church history suits the language of St. Peter so well as the few years before his martyrdom. The First Epistle may be dated eight or ten years earlier.

There is another morsel of evidence from the New

Testament which is worth notice. St. Peter describes the heretics against whom he writes as following the error of Balaam the son of Beor, and notes this among the tokens of their covetousness. In the Apocalypse (ii. 14, 15) the same people are described, and in the same terms, but with an addition. They have received a definite name, and St. John terms them several times over "the Nicolaitanes." Such a distinctive title marks a later date than St. Peter's descriptive one, which is drawn from the Old Testament. The Apocalypse was assuredly written before the destruction of Jerusalem. If then we may take the mention of the Nicolaitanes by that designation as an indication of a later date than 2 Peter, we are again brought to the time to which we have already referred the Epistle: some time between 68 and 70 A.D.

Considerable discussion has arisen about the passages in 2 Peter which are like the language of St. Jude. There can be no doubt that either one Apostle copied the words of the other, or that both drew from a common original. But this point, in whatever way it be settled, need not militate against St. Peter's authorship. It is nothing unworthy of the Apostle, if he find to his hand the words of a fellow-teacher which will serve his need, to use what he finds. Nay, the letter itself tells us that he was prepared to do this. For he refers his readers (iii. 15) to the writings of St. Paul for support of his own exhortations. St. Peter's seems, however, to be the earlier of the two epistles, if we compare his words, "There *shall be* false teachers, who *shall bring* in heresies of destruction," etc. (ii. 1), with St. Jude, who speaks of these misleading teachers as already existent and active: "There *are certain men crept in* unawares"; "*These are* spots now existing

in the feasts of charity"; "*They are feasting among the brethren* without fear." And St. Jude seems clearly to be alluding to St. Peter's words (2 Peter iii. 3) when he says, "Remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be *mockers*" (ἐμπαῖκται) "in the last time." This word for "mockers" is found only in St. Peter's epistle. It is nowhere else in the New Testament; and while St. Peter's words are a direct utterance, St. Jude's are a quotation.

But there are two or three features of resemblance between the style of St. Peter's first epistle and the second which support strongly the genuineness of the latter. The First Epistle has a large proportion of words found nowhere else in the New Testament. There are a score of such words in this short composition. Now the Second Epistle presents us with the same peculiarity in rather larger abundance. There are twenty-four words there which appear in no other New Testament writing. It seems to have been a peculiarity of the writer of both letters to use somewhat uncommon and striking words. Now take the Second Epistle to have been the work of an imitator. He would be sure to notice such a characteristic, and sure also to repeat, for the sake of connexion, some distinctive expressions of the first letter in the second. But the case is much otherwise. There is the same abundance of unusual words in both epistles, but not a single repetition; the same peculiarity is manifest, but displays itself in entirely new material. This is an index of authorship, not of imitation.

There are one or two differences between the two epistles which in their way are of equal interest. The first letter was one of encouragement and consolation;

the second is full of warning. Hence, though the coming of the Lord is dwelt on alike in the two, in the former it is set forth as a *revelation* (1 Peter i. 5), as a day for which believers were looking, and in which their hopes would be realised, and their afflictions at an end; in the second letter the same event is called a coming (*παρουσία*), an appearing, a presence, but one which will usher in the great and terrible day of the Lord, and be the prelude of judgement to them that have fallen away.

Again, the sufferings of Christ are a theme much dwelt on in the First Epistle, where they are pointed to as the lot which Christians are to expect, and the Lord is the pattern which they are to imitate; in the Second they are hardly noticed. But was there not a cause for such reticence? Was it a time to urge on men the imitation of Christ when the danger was great that they would deny Him altogether?

No doubt many other points of evidence, which are lost to us, were presented to the Fathers of the Laodicæan Council, and with the result that the Second Epistle of St. Peter was received into the Canon side by side with the first. But the three centuries of want of acknowledgement have left their mark on its subsequent history, and many earnest minds have treated it as of less authority than other more accepted portions of the New Testament. Among these is Luther, who speaks of the First Epistle as one of the noblest in the New Testament, but is doubtful about the claims of the Second. Similar was the judgment of Erasmus and of Calvin.

We cannot, however, go back to the evidence produced at Laodicæa. Time has swept that away, but, while doing so, has left us the result thereof; and the accept-

ance of the Epistle by the Fathers there assembled will be judged by most men to stand in lieu of the evidence. No court of law would permit a decision so authenticated and of such standing to be disturbed or overruled.

And we ourselves can observe some points still which draw to the same conclusion. The letter harmonises in tone with the other New Testament writings, and some of its linguistic peculiarities are strikingly in accord with the universally accepted letter of St. Peter. We are therefore not unwilling, though we have not the early testimony which we could desire, and though the primitive Church held its genuineness for doubtful, to believe that ere this second letter was classed with the other New Testament writings these doubts were cleared away, and would be cleared away for us could we hear all the evidence tendered before those who fixed the contents of the Canon.

The discovery last year in Egypt of some fragments of the Gospel and Apocalypse once current under the name of St. Peter has drawn attention once more to the genuineness and authenticity of the Second Epistle in our canon. But the difference in character between it and these apocryphal documents is very great. The Gospel ascribed to Peter seems to have been written by some one who held the opinion, current among the early heretics, that the Incarnation was unreal, and that the Divine in Christ Jesus had no participation in the sufferings at the Crucifixion. Hence our Lord is represented as having no sense of pain at that time. He is said to have been deserted by His "power" in the moment of death. The stature of the angels at the Resurrection is represented as very great, but that of the risen Christ much greater. To

these peculiar features may be added the response made by the cross to a voice which was heard from heaven, the cross having followed the risen Christ from the tomb. In the fragments of the Apocalypse we have a description of the torments of the wicked utterly foreign to the character of the New Testament writings, in which the veil of the unseen world is rarely withdrawn. The circumstance and detail given in the apocryphal fragment to the punishments of sinners mark it as the parent of those mediæval legends of which the "Visions of Furseus" and "St. Patrick's Purgatory" afford well-known examples.

The study of these fragments, of which the Gospel may be dated about 170 A.D., sends us back to the contemplation of the Second Epistle of St. Peter more conscious than before at what a very early date errors, both of history and doctrine, were promulgated among the Christian societies, while at the same time we are impressed more strongly with the sense that the accord of the Second Epistle with Gospel history, where it is alluded to, as well as the simplicity of Christian doctrine which it enforces, mark it as not unworthy of that place in the Canon which was accorded to it in the very earliest councils which dealt with the contents of New Testament Scripture.

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THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

I

THE WORK OF THE TRINITY IN MAN'S ELECTION AND SALVATION

I

THE WORK OF THE TRINITY IN MAN'S ELECTION AND SALVATION

"Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: grace to you and peace be multiplied."—1 PETER i. 1, 2.

"WHEN thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32), was the Lord's injunction to St. Peter, of which this Epistle may be considered as a part fulfilment. So richly stored is it with counsel, warning, and consolation that Luther, the conflicts of whose life will bear some comparison with the trials of these Asian converts, calls it one of the most precious portions of the New Testament Scriptures. Its value is further enhanced because in so many places the Apostle reverts in thought or word to his own life-history, and draws his teaching from the rich stream of personal experience. Even the name which he sets at the head of the letter had its lesson in connexion with Jesus. Most Jews took a second name for profaner use in their commerce with the heathen; but to Simon, the son of Jonas, Peter must have been a specially sacred name, must have served as a watchword both to himself and to all others who had learnt the story of its bestowal and the meaning which was bound up with it.

That a letter by St. Peter should be, as this is, of a very practical character is no more than we might expect from what we know of the Apostle from the Gospels. Prompt in word and action, ever the spokesman of the twelve, he seems made for a guide and leader of men. What perhaps we should not have expected is the very definite doctrinal language with which the Epistle opens. Nowhere in the writings either of St. Paul or St. John do we find more full or more instructive teaching concerning the Holy Trinity. And herein St. Peter has been guided to choose the only order which tends to edification. Sound lessons for Christian life must be grounded upon a right faith, and a brother can afford no strength to his brethren unless first of all he point them clearly to the source whence both his strength and theirs must come.

Of the previous intercourse between St. Peter and those to whom he writes we can only judge from the Epistle itself. The Apostle's name disappears from New Testament history after the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.), but we feel sure his labours did not cease then; and though the first message of Christianity may have been brought to these Asiatic provinces by St. Paul, the allusions which St. Peter makes to the trials of the converts are such as seem impossible had he not himself laboured among them. The frequent reminders, the special warnings, could come only from one who knew their circumstances very intimately. Allusions to the former lusts indulged in in their days of ignorance, to the reproaches which they now have to suffer from their heathen neighbours, to their going astray like lost sheep, are a few of the unmistakable evidences of personal knowledge.

He writes to them as *sojourners of the dispersion.*

In the minds of the Jews this name would wake up sad memories of their past history. It told of that great break in the national unity which was made by the tarrying in Babylon of so many of the people at the time of the return, then of those painful periods in later days when their nation, as the vassal now of Persia, now of Greece, of Egypt, of Syria, and of Rome, was made the sport of the world-powers as they rose and fell, times in which Israel could see few tokens of the Divine favour, could hear no voice of the prophet to encourage or to guide. But now to those who had accepted the Gospel of Christ those dark years would be seen to have been in no wise barren of blessing and of profit. The scattered Jews had carried much of their faith abroad among the nations; schools of religious teaching had arisen; the chosen people in their dispersion had adopted the language best known among the other nations; and thus the outcome of those sorrowful times had been a preparation for the Gospel. Proselytes had been made in the countries of their exile, and a wider field opened for the Christian harvest. The dispersion of Israel had been made, as it were, a bridge over which the grace of God passed for publishing the glad tidings of the Gospel, and to gather Jew and Gentile alike into the fold of Christ.

But it would be a mistake to restrict the word "dispersion" here to the Jewish converts. The Apostle speaks more than once in his letter to those who had never been Jews, to men who (i. 14) had been fashioned according to their former lusts in ignorance; who had in times past (ii. 10) no share with God's people; who (iv. 13) had wrought the will of the Gentiles, walking in lasciviousness, lusts, and abominable idolatries. To these too since their conversion the name "disper-

sion" might be fitly applied. They were but a few here and there among the multitudes of heathendom. And their acceptance of the faith of Jesus must have given to their lives a different aspect. It must often be so with the faithful. Their life is from the world apart. It must have been specially thus with these Christians in Asia. They could be verily only strangers and sojourners; their true home could never be made among their heathen surroundings. As the Jew in old days sighed for Jerusalem, so their hope was centred on a Jerusalem above.

Yet God had a mission for them in the world. This is a special portion of St. Peter's message. As the scattered Jews of old had opened a door for the spreading of the Gospel, so the Christians of the dispersion were to be its witnesses. Their election had made them a peculiar people; but it was that they might show forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvellous light, and that by their good works the heathen might be won to glorify God when in His own time He should visit them too with the day-star from on high.

But beside the words which speak of severance and pilgrimage, the Apostle uses one of a different character. With that large charity and hope which is stamped upon the whole of the New Testament, he calls these scattered Christian converts the *elect* of God. Just as St. Paul so often includes whole Churches, even though he find in them many things to blame and to reprove, under the title of "saints" or "called to be saints," so it is here. And the sense of their election is intended to be a mighty power. It is to bind them wherever they may be scattered into one communion in Christ Jesus. Through the world they are dispersed, but in Christ

they constitute a great unity. And the sense of this is to lift their hearts above any sorrowing for their isolation in the world. For through Christ they have (i. 4) an inheritance, a home, a claim of sonship; and their salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Later generations have witnessed much unprofitable controversy round this word "election." Some men have seen nothing else in the Bible, while others have hardly acknowledged it to be there at all. Then some have laboured to reconcile to their understandings the two truths of God's sovereignty and the freedom of the human will, not content to believe that in God's economy there may be things beyond their measure. St. Peter, like the other New Testament writers, enters on no such discussions. Whether amid the full assurance of newly quickened faith the first Christians found no room for intellectual difficulties, or whether the spirit within them led them to feel that such questions must ever be insoluble, we cannot know; but it is instructive to note that the Scripture does not raise them. They are the growth of later days, of times when Christianity was wide-spread, when men had lost the feeling that they were strangers and pilgrims of the dispersion, and were no longer prepared to welcome, with St. Peter and St. Paul, every Christian brother into the number of God's chosen ones, counting them as those who had been called to be saints.

Of the election of believers the Apostle here speaks in its origin, its progress, and its consummation. He views it as a process which must extend through the whole life, and connects its various stages with the Three Persons of the Trinity. But, with the same practical instinct which has already been noticed, he

enters on no statements about the nature of the Godhead in itself; he neither discusses what may be known of God, nor how the knowledge is to be obtained. He says no word to intimate that the mention of three Persons may be difficult to understand in co-relation to the unity of the Godhead. Such inquiries exercise the mind, but can hardly further, what was St. Peter's special aim, the edification and comfort of the soul. That result comes from the inward experience of what each Person of the Godhead is to us, and on this the Apostle has a lesson. He makes plain for us the share which Father, Son, and Spirit bear in the work of human salvation. Christians, he teaches us, are elect, chosen to be saints, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; the election is maintained when their lives are constantly hallowed by the influence of the Holy Ghost; while in Christ they have not only an example of perfect obedience after which they must strive, but a Redeemer whose blood can cleanse them from all the sins from which the most earnest strivings will not set them free. Of these things the Christian soul can have experience. It is thus that the life of the elect believer begins, grows, and is perfected.

It begins *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.* Here St. Peter may be his own interpreter. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost he employs the same word, "foreknowledge," and he is the only one who uses it in the New Testament. There (Acts ii. 23) he says that Christ was delivered up to be crucified by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. And on the same subject in this very chapter (i. 20) he speaks of Jesus as *foreknown*, as a Lamb without spot and blemish before the foundation of the world. In these passages we are carried back beyond the

ages into the Divine council-chamber, and we find the whole course of human history naked and open before the eyes of the All-seeing. God knew even then what the history of the human race would be, saw that sin would find an entrance into the world, and that a sacrifice would be needed, if sinners were to be redeemed. Yet He called the world and its tenants into being, and provided the ransom in the person of His only Son. Why this was well-pleasing unto Him it is not ours to discuss; whether for the uplifting of humanity by providing an opportunity for moral obedience or for the greater manifestation of His infinite love. But whatever else is mysterious, one thing is plain: the counsel of the Holy One is seen to be a counsel of mercy and of love; and though its operation may not seldom be perplexing to our finite powers, the Apostle teaches us that this determination from all eternity was made with infinite tenderness. He tells us it was the ordinance of our Father. The beginning and the end thereof are hidden from us. We learn only a fragment of His dealings during the brief period of a human life. But men may rest content with the proof of their election in the sound of the Gospel message which they hear. They who are thus called may count themselves for chosen. This call is the Divine testimony that God is choosing them. Concerning His intention towards others who may seem to have passed away without hearing of His love, or who are living as though no loving message of glad tidings had ever been proclaimed, we must rest in ignorance, only assured that the Eternal God is as truly their Father as we know Him to be ours.

To limited human knowledge the course of the world has ever been, must ever be, full of darkness and

perplexities. Men gaze upon it as they do upon the wrong side of a piece of tapestry as it is woven. To such observers the pattern is always obscure, many a time quite unintelligible. For full knowledge we have to wait to the end. Then the web will be reversed, God's designs and their working comprehended; we shall know even as we are known, and, with hearts and voices tuned to praise, shall cry, "He hath done all things well." Of such a revelation the poet (Shelley, *Adonais*, Stanza lii.) sings, a revelation of the all-seeing, unchanging Jehovah and of the glorious enlightenment that shall be in His presence:—

> "The one remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light for ever shines, earth's shadows fly:
> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity,
> Until death tramples it to fragments."

In this wise would St. Peter have us think of the grace of election. It has its beginning from our Father; its fulfilment will also be with Him. The measure and the manner of its bestowal are according to His foreknowledge, according to the same foreknowledge which provided in Christ an atonement for sin, which appointed Him to die, and that not for some sinners only, but for the sins of the whole world.

But in the call according to God's foreknowledge the believer is not perfected. He must live worthily of his calling. And as his election at the first is of God, so the power to hold it fast is a Divine gift. He who would rejoice over God's election must feel and constantly foster within himself *the sanctification of the Spirit.* To be made holy is his great need. This demands a life of progress, of renewal, a daily endeavour to restore the image which was lost at the Fall. "Be

ye holy, for I am holy," is a fundamental precept of both Old and New Testaments; and it is a continual admonition, speaking unto Christians that they go forward. Under the Law the lesson was enforced by external symbols. Holy ground, holy days, holy offices, kept men alive to the need of preparation, of purification, before they could be fit to draw near unto God or for God to draw near unto them.

For us there is opened a more excellent way: the inward, spiritual cleansing of the heart. Christ has gone away where He was before, and sends down to His servants the Holy Ghost, who bestows power that the election of the Father may be made sure. Hence we can understand those frequent exhortations in the epistles, "Walk in the Spirit"; "Live in the Spirit"; "Quench not the Spirit." The Christian life is a struggle. The flesh is ever striving for the mastery. This enemy the believer must do to death. And as aforetime, so now, sanctification begins with purification. Christ sanctifies His Church, those whom He has called to Him out of the world; and the manner is by cleansing them through the washing of water with the word. Here we gladly think of that sacrament which He ordained for admission into the Church as the beginning of this Divine operation, as the wonted entrance of the Holy Ghost for His work of purifying. But that work must be continued. He is called "holy" because He makes men holy by His abode with them. And Christ has described for us how this is brought to pass. "He shall take of Mine," says our Lord, "and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine" (John xvi. 14, 15). Every good gift, which the Father who calls men hath, the Spirit is sent to impart. The words speak of the

gradual manner of its bestowal; all things may be given, but they are given little by little, as men can or are fit to receive them. He shall take a portion of what is Mine, is the literal meaning of the Evangelist's phrase (John xvi. 15). The plural phrase *πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατὴρ* marks the boundless supply, the singular *ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται* the Spirit's choice of such a portion therefrom as best suits the receiver's needs and powers. In this wise men may become gradually conformed to the image of Christ, grow more and more like Him day by day. More and more will they drink in of the whole truth, and more and more will they be sanctified.

In this daily enlightenment must God's faithful ones live, a life whose atmosphere is the hallowing influence of the Holy Ghost. But it is to be no mere life of receptivity, with no effort of their own. The Apostle makes this clear elsewhere, when he says, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" (iii. 15)—make them fit abodes for His Spirit to dwell in; lead your lives in holy conversation, that the house may be swept and garnished, and you be vessels sanctified and meet for the Master's use.

Thus chosen by the Father and led onward by the Spirit, the Christian is brought ever nearer to the full purpose of his calling: *unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* The Christ-pattern which the Spirit sets before men is in no feature more striking than in its perfect obedience. The prophetic announcement of this submission sounds down to us from the Psalms: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God"; and the incarnate Son declares of Himself, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work": and even in the hour of His supreme agony

His word is still, "Father, not My will, but Thine, be done." Specially solemn, almost startling, is the language of the Apostle to the Hebrews when he says of Jesus that "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered," and that "it became the Father, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make Christ, the Captain of their salvation, perfect through suffering." With the Lord as an example, obedience is made the noblest, the New Testament form of sacrifice.

But when such obedience was connected with the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, the Jews among St. Peter's converts must have been carried in thought to that scene described in Exod. xxiv. There, through Moses as a mediator, we read of God's law being made known to Israel, and the people with one voice promised obedience: "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Then followed a sacrifice; and Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words"; and the Lord drew nigh unto His people, and the sight of the glory of the Lord on Mount Sinai was like devouring fire in the eyes of the children of Israel.

For Christians there is a Mediator of a better covenant. We are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, but unto Mount Zion (Heb. xii. 18–22). In that other sacrament of His own institution, our Lord makes us partakers of the benefits of His passion. With His own blood He constantly maketh His people pure, fitting them to appear in the presence of the Father. There at length the purpose of their election shall be complete in fulness of joy in the sight of Him who chose them before the foundation of the world.

Thus does the Apostle set forth his practical, profitable lessons on the work of the Trinity in man's election and salvation; and he concludes them with a benediction part of which is very frequent in the letters of St. Paul: *Grace to you and peace.* The early preachers felt that these two blessings travelled hand in hand, and comprised everything which a believer could need: God's favour and the happiness which is its fruit. Grace is the nurture of the Christian life; peace is its character. These strangers of the dispersion had been made partakers of the Divine grace. This very letter was one gift more, the consolation of which we can well conceive. But St. Peter models his benediction to be a fitting sequel to his previous teaching. *Grace*, he says, *to you and peace be multiplied.* The verb "be multiplied" is only used by him here and in the Second Epistle, and by St. Jude, whose letter has so much in common with St. Peter's.

In this prayer the same thought is with him as when he spake of the stages of the Christian election. There must ever be growth as the sign of life. Let them hold fast the grace already received, and more would be bestowed. Grace for grace is God's rule of giving, new store for what has been rightly used. This one word of his prayer would say to them, Seek constantly greater sanctification, more holiness, from the Spirit; yield your will to God in imitation of Jesus, who sanctified Himself that His servants might be sanctified. Then, though you be strangers of the dispersion, though the world will have none of you, you shall be kept in perfect peace, and feel sure that you can trust His words who says to His warfaring servants, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

II

THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE

II

THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."—1 PETER i. 3–9.

"OUT of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," words true of all this letter, but of no part more true than of the thanksgiving with which it opens. The Apostle recalls those dark three days in which the life he bore was worse than death. His vaunted fidelity had been put to the proof, and had failed in the trial; his denial had barred the approach to the Master whom he had disowned. The crucifixion of Jesus had followed close upon His arrest, and Peter's bitter tears of penitence could avail nothing. He to whom they might have appealed was lying in the grave. The Apostle's repentant weeping saved him from a Judas-like despair, but dreary must have

been the desolation of his soul until the Easter morning's message told him that Jesus was alive again.

We can understand the fervency of his thanksgiving: *Blessed be God, which hath begotten us again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.* No better image than the gift of a new life could he find to describe the restoration that came with the words of the angel from the empty tomb, "He is risen; go your way: tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee." The Lord forgave His sinning, sorrowing servant, and through this forgiveness he lived again, and bears printed for ever on his heart the memory of that life-giving. The very form of his phrase in this verse is an echo from the resurrection morning: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Only in a few passages resembling this in St. Paul's epistles[1] is God called "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." But Peter is mindful of the Lord's own words to Mary, "Go unto My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God" (John xx. 17); and now that he is made one of Christ's heralds, the feeder of His sheep, he publishes the same message which was the source of his own highest joy, and which he would make a joy for them likewise. That God is called theirs, even as He is Christ's, is an earnest that Jesus has made them His brethren indeed. To the doctrine of their election according to the foreknowledge of the Father he now adds the further grace which couples the Fatherhood of God with the brotherhood of Christ.

[1] 2 Cor. i. 3, xi. 31; Eph. i. 3, with which may be compared Rom. xvi. 6.

That these gifts are purely of God's grace he also implies: *He begat us again.* Just as in natural birth the child is utterly of the will of the parents, so is it in the spiritual new birth. *According to God's great mercy* we are born again and made heirs of all the consequent blessings. This passage from death unto life is rich, in the first place, in immediate comfort. Witness the rejoicing amidst his grief which St. Peter experienced when he could cry to the Master, "Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee." But the new life looks for ever onward. It will be unbroken through eternity. Here we may taste the joy of our calling, may learn something of the Father's love, of the Saviour's grace, of the Spirit's help; but our best expectations centre ever in the future. The Apostle terms these expectations a lively, or rather *a living, hope.* The Christian's hope is living because Christ is alive again from the dead. It springs with ever-renewed life from that rent tomb. The grave is no longer a terminus. Life and hope endure beyond it. And more than this, there is a fresh principle of vitality infused into the soul of the new-born child of God. The Spirit, the Life-giver, has made His abode there; and death is swallowed up of victory.

In continuing his description of the living hope of the believer, the Apostle keeps in mind his simile of Fatherhood and sonship, and gives to the hope the further title of *an inheritance.* As sons of Adam, men are heirs from their birth, but only to the sad consequences of the primal transgression. Slaves they are, and not free men, as that other law in their members gives them daily proof. But in the resurrection of Jesus the agonised cry of St. Paul, "Who shall deliver me?" (Rom. vii. 24), has found its answer. Chris-

tians are begotten again, not to defeat and despair, but to a hope which is eternal, to an inheritance which will endure beyond the grave. And as in their spiritual growth they are ever aspiring to an ideal above and beyond them, in respect of the saintly inheritance they have a like experience. They begin to grasp it now in part, and have even here a precious earnest of the larger blessedness; they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise and marked as the redeemed of God's own possession (Eph. i. 13, 14). But that which shall be is rich with an exceeding wealth of glory; Christ keeps the good wine of His grace to the last.

How beggared earthly speech appears when we essay by it to picture the glory that shall be revealed for us! The inheritance of the Christian's hope demands for its description those unspeakable words which St. Paul heard in paradise, but could not utter. The tongues of men are constrained to fall back upon negatives. What it will be we cannot express. We only know some evils from which it will be free. It shall be *incorruptible*, like the God and Father (Rom. i. 23) who bestows it. *Eternal*, it shall contain within it no seed of decay, nothing which can cause it to perish. Neither shall it be subject to injury from without. It shall be *undefiled*, for we are to share it with our elder Brother, our High-priest (Heb. vii. 26), who is now made higher than the heavens. Earthly possessions are often sullied, now by the way they are attained, now by the way they are used. Neither spot nor blemish shall tarnish the beauty of the heavenly inheritance. It shall *never fade away*. It is amaranthine, like the crown of glory (1 Peter v. 4) which the chief Shepherd shall bestow at His appearing; it is as the unwithering flowers of paradise.

Nor are these the only things which make the heavenly to differ from the earthly inheritance. In this life, ere a son can succeed to heirship, the parent through whom it is derived must have passed away; while the many heirs to an earthly estate diminish, as their number increases, the shares of all the rest. From such conditions the Christian's future is free. His Father is the Eternal God, his inheritance the inexhaustible bounty of heaven. Each and all who share therein will find an increase of joy as the number grows of those who claim this eternal Fatherhood, and with it a place in the Father's home.

St. Peter adds another feature which gives further assurance to the believer's hope. The inheritance is reserved. Concerning it there can be no thought of dwindling or decay. It is where neither rust nor moth can corrupt, and where not even the archthief Satan himself can break through to steal. There needs no preservation of the incorruptible and undefiled, but it is especially kept for those for whom it is prepared. He who has gone before to make it ready said, "I go to prepare it for you." The Apostle has made choice of his preposition advisedly. He says, εἰς ὑμᾶς[1]—on your behalf; for your own possession. The inheritance is where Christ has gone before us, in heaven, of which we can best think, as Himself hath taught us, as the place "where He was before" (John vi. 62), the Father's house, in which are many mansions. There it is in store, till we are made ready for it.

For the present life is only a preparation-time. Ere we are ready to depart we must pass through a proba-

[1] The better reading, looking back to the ἡμᾶς of ver. 3, appears to be εἰς ἡμᾶς, and it is well supported.

tion. God suffers His beloved ones to be chastened, but He sends with the trial the means of rescue. They are *guarded.* The word which St. Peter here uses is one applicable to a military guard, such as would be needed in the country of an enemy. God sees what we stand in need of. For we are still in the territory of the prince of this world. But mark the abundant protection: *by the power of God through faith.* The Apostle's language sets our guardianship forth under a double aspect. The Christian is "in" (ἐν) "the power of God." Here is the strength of our wardship. Under such care the believer is enabled to walk amid the trials of the world unscathed. Yet the Divine shield around him is not made effective unless he do his part also. Through faith the shelter becomes impregnable. The Christian goes forward with full assurance, his eyes fixed on the goal of duty which his Master has set before him, and, heedless of assailants, perseveres in the struggles which beset him. Then, even in the fiercest fires of trial, he beholds by his side the Son of God, and hears the voice, "It is I; be not afraid."

Thus to the faithful warfarer the victory is sure. And to this certainty St. Peter points as he continues, and calls the heavenly inheritance a *salvation.* This will be the consummation. "Sursum corda" is the believer's constant watchword. The completed bliss will not be attained here. But when the veil is lifted which separates this life from the next, it is ready to be manifested and to ravish the sight with its glory. The sense of this salvation ready to be revealed nerves the heart for every conflict. By faith weakness grows mighty. Thus comes to pass the paradox of the Christian life, which none but the faithful can comprehend: "When I am weak, then I am strong";

"I can do all things through Christ, that giveth me power."

Hence comes the wondrous spectacle, which St. Peter was contemplating, and which amazed the heathen world, exceeding joy in the midst of sufferings. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice*, he says. Some have thought him to be referring to a mental realisation of the last time, about which he has just spoken, a realisation so vivid to the faith of these converts that they could exult in the prospect as though it had already arrived. And this exposition is countenanced in some degree by words which follow (ver. 9), where he describes them as now receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

But it seems less forced to consider the Apostle as speaking with some knowledge of the circumstances of these Asian Christians, a knowledge of the trials they had to undergo, and how hope was animating them to look onwards towards their inheritance, which was but a little while in reversion, towards the salvation which was so soon to be revealed. Full of this hope, he says, ye greatly rejoice, though ye have had many things to suffer. Then he proceeds to dwell on some of the grounds for their consolation. Their trials, they knew, were but for a little while, not a moment longer than the need should be. Their sorrow would have an end; their joy would last for evermore.

The form of St. Peter's words,[1] it is true, seems to imply that there must always be the need for our chastening. And what else can the children of Adam expect? But it is He, the Father in heaven, who fixes both the nature and the duration of His children's discipline.

[1] Εἰ δέον ἐστί—if need be as need there is.

Some men have felt within themselves the need of chastisement so keenly that they have devised systems for themselves whereby they should mortify the flesh, and prepare themselves for the last time. But of self-appointed chastenings the Apostle does not speak. Of such the converts to whom he writes had no need. They *had been put to grief in manifold temptations.*

We can gather from the Epistle itself some notion of the troublous life these scattered Christians had amid the crowd of their heathen neighbours. They were regarded with contempt for refusing to mingle in the excesses which were so marked a feature of heathen life and heathen worship. They were railed upon as evil-doers. They suffered innocently, were constantly assailed with threatenings, and passed their time oft in such terror that St. Peter describes their life as a fiery trial.

Yet in the word (ποικίλος) which he here employs to picture the varied character of their sufferings we seem to have another hint that these did not fall out without the permission and watchful control of God Himself. It is a word which, while it tells of a countless variety, tells at the same time of fitness and order therein. The trials are meted out fitly, as men need and can profit by them. The Master's eye and hand are at work through them all; and the faithful God keeps always ready a way of deliverance. In this wise does St. Peter proclaim that the putting to grief may be made unto us a dispensation of mercy. Himself had been so put to grief by the thrice-repeated question, "Lovest thou Me?" (John xxi. 17). But a way was opened thereby for repentance of his triple denial, and that he might thrice over be entrusted with the feeding of Christ's flock. Such was the putting to grief of the

Corinthian Church (2 Cor. vii. 9) by St. Paul's first letter, for it wrought in them repentance, so that they sorrowed after a godly sort. And such sorrow can exist side by side with, yea be the source of, exceeding joy. The Apostle of the Gentiles is a witness when he says that he and his fellow-labourers are "sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing" (2 Cor. vi. 10).

The Christian does not allow troubles to overwhelm him. The very comparison which St. Peter here institutes, speaking though it does of a furnace of trial, bears within it somewhat of consolation. Gold that is proved by the fire loses all the dross which clung about it and was mingled with it before the refining. It comes forth in all its purity, all its worth; and so shall it be with the believer after his probation. The things of earth will lose their value in his eyes; they will fall away from him, neither will he load himself with the thick clay of the world's honours or wealth. The ties of such things have been sundered by his trials, and his heart is free to rise above the anxieties of time. And better even than the most refined gold, which, be it never so excellent, will yet be worn away, the faith of the believer comes forth stronger for all trial, and he shall hear at the last the welcome of the Master, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," the joy which He bestows, the joy which He shares with those that follow Him.

This is the revelation of Jesus Christ of which St. Peter speaks. This is the praise which through His atonement His servants shall find, and shall become sharers of the glory and honour which the Father has bestowed upon Him. To Christ then turns every affection. *Whom not having seen ye love.* This is the test since Christ's ascension, and has the promise of

special blessing. To His doubting Apostle Christ vouchsafed the evidence he desired, for our teaching as well as for his; but He added therewith, "Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed." And their joy is such as no tongue can tell. Not for that are they silent in their rejoicing; their hearts overflow, and their voices go forth in constant songs of praise. But ever there remains with them the sense, "The half has not been told."

For faith anticipates the bliss which God hath prepared for them that love Him, and enters into the unseen. The Holy Spirit within the soul is ever making fuller revelation of the deep things of God. The believer's knowledge is ever increasing; the eye-salve of faith clears his spiritual vision. The thanksgivings of yesterday are poor when considered in the illumination of to-day. His joy also is glorified. As his aspirations soar heavenward, the glory from on high comes forth, as it were, to meet him. By gazing in faith on the coming Lord, the Christian progresses, through the power of the Spirit, from glory to glory; and the ever-growing radiance is a part of that grace which no words can tell. But so true, so real, is the sense of Christ's presence that the Apostle describes it as full fruition. Believers *receive even now the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.* So assured does He make them of all which they have hoped for that they behold already the termination of their journey, the close of all trial, and are filled with the bliss which shall be fully theirs when Christ shall come to call His approved servants to their inheritance of salvation.

III

THE UNITY AND GLORIOUSNESS OF THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

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"Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that *should come* unto you: searching what *time* or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into."—I PETER i. 10–12.

THE message of the Gospel unlocks the treasures of Old Testament revelation. Evangelists and Apostles are the exponents of the prophets. The continuity of Divine revelation has never been broken. The Spirit which spake through Joel of the pentecostal outpouring had spoken to men in the earlier days, to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David, and was now shed forth upon the first preachers of the Gospel, and bestowed abundantly for the work of the newly founded Church of Christ. St. Peter, himself a chief recipient of the gift, here proclaims the oneness of the whole of revelation; and more than this, he bears witness to the oneness of the teaching of the whole body of Christian missionaries. St. Paul and his fellow-labourers had spread the glad tidings first of all among these Asian

converts; but there is no thought in St. Peter's mind of a different gospel from his own. Those who preached the Gospel to them in the first instance were, even as himself, working in and by the same Holy Spirit.

In the preceding verses of the chapter the thoughts of the Apostle have been dwelling on the future, on the time when the hope of the believer shall attain its fruition, and faith shall be lost in sight. He now turns his glance backward to notice how the promise of salvation has been the subject of revelation through all time. To those among the converts who had studied the Jewish Scriptures such a retrospect would be fruitful in instruction. They would comprehend with him how the truths which they now heard preached had been gradually shadowed forth in the Divine economy. That first proclamation of the seed of the woman to be born for the overthrow of the tempter, but who yet must Himself be a Sufferer in the conflict, was now become luminous, and in outline presented the whole scheme of redemption. The study of the development of that scheme would beget a full trust in their hearts for the future as they contemplated the stages of its foreshadowing in the past.

Concerning which salvation, he says, *the prophets sought and searched diligently.* The Divine revelation could only be made as men were able to bear it, and the sentences of old must needs be dark. At first God's love was set forth by His covenants with the patriarchs. Then the wider scope of mercy was proclaimed in the promises given to Abraham and repeated to his posterity. In their seed, it was declared, not the chosen race alone, but all the nations of the earth, should be blessed. Here all through the history was ground enough for diligent searching among the faithful.

How could these things be, Abraham solitary and aged, Isaac's sons at feud with each other, Jacob and his posterity in captivity? Even at their best estate these seemed little fitted for the destiny which had been foretold to them. But throughout the Mosaic history some clung to their faith, and their great leader foresaw that the promise would be fulfilled in its time through One of whom he was but a feeble representative. But to so wide a vision only a few attained.

In the evil days which followed, the hope of the people must often have dwindled down; but yet at times, as to Gideon's diminished army, it was made manifest that the Lord could do great things for His people: and the thought of the seed of the woman promised as a Deliverer lingered in many hearts, and enabled them to sing in thankfulness how the adversaries of the Lord should be broken in pieces, how out of heaven the Lord should thunder upon them, and prove Himself the Judge of all the ends of the earth, giving strength unto His king and exalting the horn of His anointed. In such wise the prophetic teaching, which had advanced from the blessing of an individual to the choice and exaltation of a chosen family, was expanded in the noblest spirits to the conception of a kingdom of God among all mankind, and assumed a more definite form when the promise was made to the Son of David that His throne should be established for ever.

But how imperfectly God's design was comprehended by the best among them we can see from the last words of David himself (2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7). In them we have an instance of the searching which must have occupied other hearts beside that of the king of Israel. The Spirit of the Lord had spoken by him, and a promise of future glory had been made, when all

should be brightness, every cloud dispersed. But the vision tarried. The house of David was not so with God. Yet he still held firmly to the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, a covenant of salvation, though as yet God made it not to grow. David may be numbered among those *who prophesied of the grace that should come* hereafter; and his words are shaped by a power above his own, to suggest the advent of Him who was to be the "dayspring from on high."

He and the other enlightened Israelites who have left us their thoughts and aspirations in the Psalter felt that the history of the chosen people was from first to last a grand parable (Psalm lxxviii. 2), and that the present could always be learning from the leading and discipline of the past. The miracles and the chastisements which they recite were all tokens of the sure promise, tokens that the people were not forgotten, but constantly aided by instruction, warning, and reproof. So that another psalmist, though still searching for the fuller meaning of the parables and dark sayings through which he was conducted, could sing, "God shall redeem my soul from the hand of the grave, for He shall take me" (Psalm xlix. 15). There is a confidence in the words, a confidence enough to sustain amid many trials. To such a man the present was not all. There was a life to come where God should be and rule, and his heart had not seldom gone forth to the questioning *at what time and in what form* the promises should be fulfilled. Like Abraham, such men had seen the day of Christ in vision and rejoiced over it, and the *Spirit of Christ was within them* to sustain them. But the things which they had heard and known, and of which their fathers had told them, supplied cause for deep searchings as *to the time and the manner of time unto which the*

Spirit pointed. The strength of the Lord and His wondrous works were to be rehearsed to the coming generations, that among them the hope might live, by them the searching be continued. And as time went on the vision was widened, for in no small number of the Psalms we find the promised blessedness described as the portion not of Israel only, but through Israel grace was to be extended to the ends of the earth. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands," is no solitary invocation.

And when we turn to those prophets whose writings we possess, we recognise that in them the Spirit of Christ was working and pointing forward to the coming redemption. But long before the days of Isaiah and Micah the Spirit of the Lord had come mightily upon His servants, and that picture of a glorious future which both those seers have given to us was not improbably the utterance of some earlier servant of the Lord: "It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii. 2; Micah iv. 1). Thus far had they attained, but the search was not ended. "The last days"! When these should come was known to God alone; and they spake only as they were moved by Him, standing on their towers of spiritual elevation, hearkening what the Lord would say to them, and delivering His message with all the fulness they could command. But they were sure of the final bliss.

Of the same character are those words of Joel, which St. Peter quoted in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, "It shall come to pass *afterward*" (ii. 28). Beyond this was not yet revealed. But it was the voice of God

which spake through the prophet: "In those days I will pour out My Spirit." And the Divine voice spake of visitations of another kind. It *testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them.* We feel sure that here St. Peter had in mind Isa. liii., which the New Testament has taught us to apply in its fullest sense to our blessed Lord.

But the language of St. Peter in this clause deserves special notice. He does not use the ordinary words by which the personal sufferings of Christ would generally be expressed, but he says rather, "the sufferings which pertain unto Christ." And here we may well consider whether the variation of phrase be not designed. St. Paul uses the simple direct expression (2 Cor. i. 5), and so does St. Peter himself (1 Peter iv. 13); and in those passages the Apostles are speaking of the sufferings of Christ as shared by His people. It would almost seem as if St. Peter's phrase in the verse before us were intended to convey this sense more fully. The sufferings pertain unto Christ, were specially borne by Him; but they fall also upon those who are, and have been, His people, both before and after the Incarnation.

Those prophecies of Isaiah which speak of the sufferings of the servant of the Lord had long been expounded as meant of the Jewish nation, and with such interpretation St. Peter was doubtless familiar. Hence may have come his altered phrase, capable of being interpreted, not only of Christ Himself, but of the sufferings of those who, like these Asiatic converts, were for the Lord's sake exposed to manifold trials. This double application of the words, to Christ and to His servants also, explains, it may be, the unique use of the word "glories" in the clause which follows:

the sufferings of Christ and the *glories* that should follow them. For the glories may be taken to signify not only that honour and glory which the Father has given unto Christ, but also the glory in which they shall share who have taken up their cross to follow Him. Nowhere else in the New Testament does this plural word occur. To draw a sense like this from it would minister no small comfort to the Christians in their trials; and just before St. Peter has described the joy which they should experience as "glorified," or "full of glory" (ver. 8). In like manner St. Paul speaks (Rom. viii. 18) of the sufferings of this present time as not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us in the resurrection.

It would also serve as consolation to the sufferers, who were thus pointed on to the future for Christ's best gifts, to know that a similar forward glance had been the lot of the prophets under the ancient dispensation. One here and there had felt, as Malachi (iii. 1), that the Lord whom they were seeking was soon to come; but we know of none before the aged Simeon to whom it had been made known that they should not die till they had seen the Lord's Christ. To the former generations *it was revealed*, says the Apostle, *that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things.* They beheld them, and greeted them, but it was afar off. They spake often one to another of a bliss that was to come; yet though praying, longing, and hoping for it, they saw it only with the eye of faith. The psalmists supply many illustrations of this forward projection of the thoughts which dwelt on the Messianic hope. Thus in Psalm xxii. 30, 31, while rejoicing over his own rescue from suffering, the speaker recognises that this is but a foreshadowing of

another suffering and another deliverance, even the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. "It shall be told of the Lord unto the next generation. They shall come; they shall declare His righteousness to a people that shall be born, that He hath done it," and again in another place, "This shall be written for the generation to come, and a people which shall be created shall praise the Lord" (Psalm cii. 18). And these anticipations are ever coupled with the thought of the wider extension of the kingdom of God, with the time when "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord," "when the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth His glory."

But the things which prophets and psalmists ministered *have now been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you.* You, St. Peter would say, are now not heirs expectant, but possessors of the blessings which former ages of believers foresaw and foretold, just as in his pentecostal address he testifies, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." And those who have preached these glad tidings unto you, he continues, have not done so without warrant. They are joined by an unbroken link to the prophets who went before them. In those the Spirit of Christ wrought at such times as He found fit instruments for raising a little the veil that lay over the purposes of God. The preachers of the Gospel have the same Spirit, and speak unto you *by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven.* These (and of St. Peter is this specially true) had witnessed the sufferings of Christ, and been made partakers of the glories of the outpoured Spirit. The promise of the Father had been fulfilled to them, and they had received a mouth and wisdom which their adversaries were not able to

resist. The risen Lord, the assurance of a life to come, the guidance by the Spirit into all truth—these were now realities for them, and were to be made real for the rest of the world by their testimony.

And that he may further magnify that salvation which he has been describing as published in part under the Law and now assured by the message of the Gospel, he adds, *which things angels desire to look into.* Of the whole Divine plan for man's redemption the angels could hardly be cognisant. Of God's love for man they had been made conscious, had been employed as His agents in the exhibition of that love, both under the old and under the new covenant. Their ministry, we know, was exercised in the lives of Abraham and Lot; they watched over Jacob and over Elijah in their solitude and weariness. One of their host was sent to deliver Daniel and to instruct the prophet Zechariah. At a later day they, who stand above mankind in the order of creation, and are pure enough to behold the presence of the Most High, were made messengers to announce how the Son of God had deigned to assume, not their nature, but the nature of humanity, and would by His suffering lift up the race from its slavery to sin. They proclaimed the birth of the Baptist, and brought the message of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin. They heralded the birth of Christ to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and a multitude of their glorious company sang the song of glory to God in the highest. They tended the God-Man at His temptation, strengthened Him in His agony, were present at His sepulchre, and gave the news of the Resurrection to the early visitants. Nor were their services at an end with Christ's ascension, though they were present on that occasion also. To Cornelius and to Peter angels were made messengers,

and our Lord has told us that their rejoicing is great over even one sinner that repenteth.

These immortal spirits whose home is before God's throne, and whose great office is to sing His praise, yet find in those ministrations to mankind in which they have been employed matter for admiration, matter which kindles in them fervent desire. They long to comprehend in all its fulness that grace which they are conscious God is shedding forth upon mankind. They would scan[1] all the workings of His love and His forbearance towards sinners. These things are to them a subject of admiration, even as was the empty tomb of Jesus to the disciples after the Resurrection; and from their high estate the angelic host would fain stoop down to gaze their fill upon what God's goodness has wrought and is working out for mankind. They feel that this knowledge would add a new theme to the songs around the throne, would give them still greater cause to extol that grace which manifests its noblest features in showing mercy and pity.

And if such be the aspiration of angels, sinless beings who feel not the need of rescue, shall the tongues of men be dumb, men who know, each from the experience of his own heart, how great is the evil of sin in which they are entangled, how hopeless without Christ's death was their deliverance from its thraldom; who know how constant and how undeserved is the mercy of which they are partakers, how true to Himself God has been in their case? "I am Jehovah; I change not: therefore ye children of men are not destroyed."

[1] *παρακύψαι* is the word employed to describe the stooping of the disciples and Mary that they might look into the grave of Jesus (Luke xxiv. 12; John xx. 5, 11).

IV

THE CHRISTIAN'S IDEAL, AND THE STEPS THEREUNTO

IV

THE CHRISTIAN'S IDEAL, AND THE STEPS THEREUNTO

"Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in *the time of* your ignorance: but like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear: knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, *even the blood* of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God."—1 PETER i. 13–21.

THE Apostle, who has set forth the character of the Christian's election, who has given to the converts large assurance for the hope which he exhorts them to hold, who has proclaimed the exceeding glory of their inheritance in the future and how its nature had been foreshadowed in type and prophecy, now turns to those practical lessons which he would enforce from the doctrines of election and of the future glory in heaven. Such glorious privileges cannot be looked

forward to without awakening a sense of corresponding duties, and for these he would not have them unprepared. *Wherefore*, he says, because you have the assurance of what the best men of old only dimly foresaw, *girding up the loins of your mind, be sober*. The Apostle has in mind the words of his Master, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord" (Luke xii. 35, 36). The advent of the bridegroom may be sudden; those who would be of his train must be prepared for their summons. To be girt in body is a token of readiness for coming duty. And St. Peter's figure would speak more forcibly to Eastern ears than it does to ours. Without such girding the Oriental is helpless for active work, the encumbrance of his flowing robes being fatal to exertion. The heart of the Christian must be untrammelled with the cares, the affections, the pleasures of the world. He must be free to run the race which lies before him, as was the well-girt prophet who ran before the royal chariot to the entrance of Jezreel.

And the Christian life is no light care, as St. Peter pictures it. First, he says, *Be sober*. To train the mind to exercise self-restraint is no easy duty at any time, but specially in a season of religious excitement. We know how converts in the very earliest days of Christianity were carried into excesses both in action and in word; and in every age of quickened activity some have been found with whom freedom degenerated into licence, and emotion took the place of true religious feeling. The Jewish converts in the provinces of Asia might be tempted to despise those who still clung to the ancient faith, while some of those who had been won from heathenism

might by their conduct alienate rather than win their brethren in Christ. We gather what was the nature of the peril when we find the Apostle (iv. 7) urging this sobriety as a frame of mind to be cultivated even in their prayers, and St. Paul in his advice to Timothy combining the exhortation to sobriety with "Suffer hardship; do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5). It is the frame of mind meet for the maintenance of sound doctrine, utterly opposed to those itching ears which are only satisfied with teaching according to their own lusts. Fitly therefore does our Apostle add to his first exhortation a second which will make the believers steadfast: *Set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you.* In those early days this counsel was not always easy to follow. There were many enticements to wavering, many trials which made the firm hold on strong faith difficult to maintain. And with the "perfectly" must be combined that other sense of the word "to the end." The hope must be perfect in its nature, unshaken in its firmness, persuaded of the certainty of the future grace, and strengthened in that persuasion by the experience of the present working of the Spirit. But the language of the Apostle almost anticipates the future. He says not so much that the grace is "to be brought," but rather that it is even now "being brought" near and coming ever nearer; for the revelation of Jesus Christ is progressive. Though we learn something, it is only so much as teaches us that there is more still to learn of the boundless stores of grace. But as in a former verse he spake of believers as having already by faith their salvation in possession, even such is his language here. And mark his lesson on the free gift of God's grace. It is not a blessing to which the believer can attain of

his own power. He can hope for it; he can feel assured that God in His own time will bestow it. But whenever it comes, either as present grace to help in trial, or future grace which shall be revealed, it is given, brought, bestowed; and its full fruition will only be reached *at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* But assuredly these words may be applied to this life as well as to the next. He who said, "The Holy Spirit shall take of Mine and declare it unto you," designs to be ever more and more revealed in the hearts of His followers. His grace is being brought to them day by day, and trains continually unto obedience those who have been sprinkled with His blood.

And this obedience is the next precept for which they are to be made ready by the girding up of the loins of their minds, *as children of obedience*, the obedience not of slaves, but of sons. Children they are become by virtue of the new birth, and obedience it is which gives them a claim upon God's Fatherhood. They must seek for the docility and trustfulness of the childlike character; they must accept a law other than their own wills, having taken upon them the yoke of Christ and aiming, in the light of His example, to become worthy of being reckoned among His true followers.

When they contemplate their own lives, they must feel that a mighty change is needed from what they were aforetime. St. Peter's words mark the completeness of the needed change: *not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts.* In time past they had sought no further for a guide and pattern than their own perverted desires; now they must school themselves to say, "Do with me as Thou wilt, for I am Thine." And He whose grace has begotten them again will help them to frame their lives by His rule, will

have them learn of Him. But while the Apostle dwells on the difference which must come over the lives of these converts, mark the wondrous charity with which he alludes to their former life in error. *In the time of your ignorance*, he says. Even here he follows the example of the Lord, who prayed in His agony, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Sin blinds the moral and the mental vision too, and men so blinded sink deeper and deeper into the slough, while he who has learnt Christ has gained another source of light. But, to raise the ignorant, they must be taught; and tenderness makes teaching most effective, and charity dictates the apostolic words. So St. Paul at Athens to those who worshipped an unknown God offered instruction to win them from their ignorance, and pointed them to a God whose offspring they were, and to whose likeness they might be conformed.

Just so does St. Peter; *Like as He who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living.* This has been God's call from the first day until now, but what a hopeless height is this for the sinner to aim after, holy as God is holy! Yet it is the standard which Christ sets before us in the Sermon on the Mount: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And why does He propose to us that which is impossible? Because with the command He is ready to supply the power. He knows our frailty; knows what is in man both of strength and weakness. At the same time He proclaims to us by this command what God intends to make of us. He will restore us again to His own likeness. That which was God's at first shall be made God's once more. The marred image, on which not even the superscrip-

tion can be traced, shall again be revealed in full clearness, and the believer purged from all the defilements of sin by the grace and help of Him who says, "Be ye perfect," because He loves to make us so.

Because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy. This command comes down to us from the earliest days of the Law. But in those old times it could not be said, *in all manner of living.* These words betoken the loftier standard of the New Testament. The patriarchs and prophets and the people among whom they lived were trained, and could only be trained, little by little. Even in the best among them we cannot hope for holiness in all manner of living. It was only by the types and figures of external purification that their thoughts were directed to the inner cleansing of the heart, and long generations passed before the lessons were learnt. The full sense of the Fatherhood of God was not attained under the Law, nor did men under it learn fully to live as children of obedience, children of a Father who loves and will succour every effort which they make to walk according to His law. The Incarnation has brought God nearer to man, and on this relationship of love the Apostle grounds his further exhortation.

And if ye call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear. But the fear which St. Peter means is a fear which grows out of love, a fear to grieve One who is so abundant in mercy. Who can call on God as Father but the children of obedience? About the Father's will and His power to make you holy there need be no fear. He has called men and bidden them strive after holiness. The way is steep, but they will not be unattended. What fear then of failing to attain the goal? For the Father will

also be the Judge. And here is the ground for eternal hope and thankfulness, which the Apostle expresses in words akin to those which he used in the house of Cornelius: "Now I see that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." Yes, this is the fear which God looks for, not a paralysing dread which checks all effort and kills out all hope. Our Judge knows that our work will be full of faults, but fear of Him must nerve us to make the endeavour. It is not what men do, the feeble sum of their performance, that He regards. The way, the spirit, the motive, from which it is wrought—these will be the ground of our Father's judgement. Hence the Gospel is a message for all the world alike. The poor and lowly, to whom no great deeds are possible, may through it live a life of hope. It is not great gifts poured into the treasury from an abundant store that have value in His eyes, but the gifts which come with a heart's sacrifice—these are precious indications, and receive the blessing, "They have done what they could." And God's children are to look on their life as no more than a brief pilgrimage. It is a time of sojourning, in which the small occurrences are of little account.[1] Earth is to the Christian, what Egypt was of old to the Hebrews, no home, but a place of trial and oppression of the enemy. God will bring His children forth, even as He did of old. But the dread to be most entertained is lest the many attractions should, like the flesh-pots of the history, win the affection of the pilgrims, and make them not unwilling to linger in the house of bondage and to

[1] This would appeal with force to the hearts of those who were of the dispersion. Therein they would behold a picture of what all earthly life is as compared with the home to come.

think lightly of peril which surrounds them there. The great preservative from this danger is to revive constantly the thought of the great things which have been done for us. Be in fear of the world and its beguilements, says St. Peter, *knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers.* The redemption price is paid, has been paid for all men. Shall any then be willing to tarry in their slavery? Ye were redeemed. The work is complete. "It is finished," was the last sigh of the dying Lord, who before had testified that His true disciples might be of good cheer, because He had overcome the world.

But in the hearts of men the world and its allurements die very hard. The men for whom St. Peter wrote would surely find this so. They had many of them lived long either under Judaism or in heathendom, and would be surrounded still by friends and kinsmen who clung to the ancient teaching and customs. Prejudices were sure to abound, and the ties of blood in such cases are very strong, as we know ourselves from mission experience in India. The Apostle speaks of their manner of life as handed down from their fathers. He may have had in his thought the corruption of the human race from the sin of our first parents. Generation after generation has been involved in the consequences of that primal transgression. But he probably thought rather of the converts from idolatry and the life which they had led in their days of ignorance. Of God's covenant with the chosen people, though now it was abolished, St. Peter would hardly speak as a *vain* manner of life. But to the worship of the heathen the word might fitly be applied. Paul and Barnabas entreat the crowd at Lystra, who would have done

sacrifice to them as to their gods, to turn from these *vanities* to serve the living God (Acts xiv. 15); and to the Ephesians St. Paul writes that they should no longer walk, as the other Gentiles walk, in the *vanity* of their mind (Eph. iv. 17). The parents of such men, having themselves no knowledge, could impart none to their children, could not lift them higher, could not make them purer; and yet the ties of natural affection would plead strongly for what had been held right by their fathers for generations.

But the price which has been paid for their ransom may convince them how precious they are in the eyes of a Father in heaven. They are redeemed *with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*, even the blood *of Christ*. For ages the offering of sacrifices had kept before the minds of Israel the need of a redemption, but they could do no more. The blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer suffice only to the purifying of the flesh, and can never take away sin. But now the true fountain is opened, and St. Peter has learnt, and bears witness, what was the meaning of the words of Jesus, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (John xiii. 8). The door of mercy is opened, that by the knowledge of such wondrous love the hearts of men may be opened also.

And this counsel of God has been from all eternity. Christ *was foreknown before the foundation of the world* as the Lamb to be offered for human redemption. The world and its history form but a tiny fragment of God's mighty works, and yet for mankind a plan so overflowing with love was included in the vision of Jehovah before man or his home had existence except in the Divine mind. Now by the Incarnation the secret counsel is brought to light, and the foretokenings of

type and prophecy receive their interpretation. *He was manifested at the end of the times for your sake.* He was made flesh, and tabernacled among men; He showed by the signs which He wrought that He was the Saviour drawing near to them that they might draw near unto Him. His lifting up on the cross spake of the true healing of the souls of all who would look unto Him. And when death had done its work upon the human body, He was manifested more thoroughly as the beloved Son of God by His resurrection from the grave. The first Christians felt that God's work was now complete, salvation secured. It is not unnatural therefore that they should expect the drama of the world's history soon to be closed. For the Master had not seldom spoken of the coming of a speedy judgement. Hence the age in which they lived seemed to merit the name of "the end of the times." We now can see that the judgement of which Christ spake was wrought in great part by the overthrow of Jerusalem, though His words are still prospective, and will not find their entire fulfilment till the close of human history; and the whole Christian era may be intended and included in "the end of the times." This was the goal towards which God's counsel had been moving since the world was made. No new revelation is to be looked for, and we who live in the light of Christ's religion are those upon whom the ends of the world are come. In this sense the words may be applied in every age and to every generation of Christians. To them, as to St. Peter's converts, the preacher may testify, "For your sakes" all this was planned and wrought, and may offer the ransom of the Saviour to His people, assured that in this speck of time Christ is being manifested for their sake also.

For *they through Him are believers in God*, as the Lord Himself hath testified. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me"; "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The words are as true to-day as when Christ was upon earth. Since the Fall the glory and majesty of Jehovah have been unapproachable. Sin rendered man both unfit and unable to have the pure communion of the days of innocence. It was the vision of Jesus by faith which brought Abraham near to God and filled him with joy. And so with all the saints and prophets of the first covenant. They beheld Him, but it was afar off. They greeted the maturing promises, but only as strangers and pilgrims upon earth. To the Asian converts and to us also the testimony of St. Peter and his fellows is from those who beheld the glory of God as it was manifested in Christ, who saw Him when raised from the dead, and watched His ascent into the glory of heaven. And by such witness faith in what God has wrought is confirmed. We are sure that He raised Christ from the dead; we are sure that He has received Him into glory: and thus through all generations the faith and hope of Christians are sustained and rest unshaken upon God.

V

CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD: ITS CHARACTER AND DUTIES

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"Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: but the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you. Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."—I PETER i. 22–ii. 3.

THAT holy lives have been lived in solitude none would venture to dispute, and that devout Christians have found strength for themselves and given examples to the world by withdrawal from the society of their fellows is attested more than once in the history of Christendom. But with lives of such isolation and seclusion the New Testament exhibits little sympathy. To whatever preparation the Christian is exhorted, it is never with a view to himself. Though not of the world, he is to be in the world, that men may profit by his example. The prayer of the Lord for His disciples ere He left them was, not that they might be taken out of the world, but protected from its evils.

Christ's intention was to found a Church, a communion, a brotherhood, and all His language looks that way: "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren"; "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." And of like character is the teaching of the Epistles: "Be kindly affectioned in love of the brethren" (Rom. xii. 10); "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. xiii. 1). We are in no way surprised therefore when St. Peter turns from his exhortations to personal sobriety, obedience, and holiness, and addresses the converts on the application of these virtues, that through them they may bind in closer bonds the brotherhood of Christ: *Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently.* Obedience is the sole evidence by which the believer can show that God's call has wrought in him effectually. His election is of the Father's foreknowledge, his sanctification is the gift of the Holy Spirit, and it is the sprinkling of the blood of Christ which makes him fit for entry into the house of the Father. In the Christian, so called and so aided, there must be a surrender of himself to the guidance of that Spirit which deigns to guide him. The law in his members must be mortified, and another and purer law accepted as the rule of his life. This law St. Peter calls "the truth" because it has been made manifest in its perfection in the life of Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Of this example St. Paul testifies as "the truth which is in Jesus." He therefore who would cherish the Christian hope will purify himself even as Christ is pure. The way and means unto such purification is obedience.

This first and most needful step the Apostle believes,

from his knowledge of their lives, that these Asian converts have taken in earnest, and thus have attained to a love of their brethren which differs utterly from the love which the world exhibits, which is true, sincere, unfeigned. But the believer's life is a life of constant progress. Daily advance is the evidence of vitality. All the language which Scripture applies to it proclaims this to be its character. It is called a walk, a race, a pilgrimage, a warfare. The Christian all his life through will find himself so far from what Christ intends to make him that he must ever be pressing forward. Hence, though they have attained to a stage of purification, have put off in some degree the old man, the Apostle's exhortation is, "Press forward"; "Love one another from the heart fervently." The English word describes a warmth and earnestness of love which is deep-seated and true, but the original expresses more than this, more of the sustained effort to which St. Peter is urging them. It points to incessant striving, to a constancy like that of the prayers of the Church for the Apostle himself when he was in prison, a prayer made unto God without ceasing. So steadfast must be the Christian love; and such love the purified, undistracted heart alone can manifest, a heart which has been released from the entanglements of earthly ambitions and strivings, whose affections are fully set on the things above.

Such souls must be filled with the Spirit; a steadfastness like this comes only of the new birth. And of this the converts are reminded in the words which follow: *having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God.* It is true they are but at the outset of their Christian course; but if any man be in Christ, he is made a new

creature. And in this connexion the word of God might be taken in a twofold sense. First, the Word who was made flesh, in whom was light; and the light was the life of men. Through His resurrection God has begotten men again to a life which shall know no corruption. But the figure which the Apostle presently employs of the withering grass and the falling flower carries our mind rather to Christ's explanation of His own parable. The seed is the word of God, *which liveth and abideth.* And throughout the New Testament the life-possessing and life-giving power of the Gospel is made everywhere conspicuous. When it was first proclaimed, we read again and again, "The word of God grew mightily and prevailed" (Acts xii. 24, xix. 20); and the figurative language used to describe its character shows how potent is its might. It is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. vi. 16); "It is quick and powerful" (Heb. iv. 12). By it Christ foiled the tempter. It makes those strong in whom it abides (1 John ii. 14). It is free, and not bound (2 Tim. ii. 9). St. Paul calls it "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16), "the word of truth, the gospel of salvation" (Eph. i. 13), and says, "It comes, not in word only, but in power" (1 Thess. i. 5). This is the incorruptible seed of which St. Peter speaks. And his words force on our thoughts that for such a seed a fitting ground must be prepared, if the new life of which it is the source is to bear its due fruit. This preparation it is which the Apostle is anxious to enforce, the purifying and cleansing of the seed-plot of men's hearts. They must not be hardened so as to forbid it access, and leave it for every chance enemy to trample on or carry away; they must not be choked with alien thoughts and purposes: the cares of life, the

pleasures of the world. Such things perish in the using, and can have no affinity with the living and abiding word of God, which, even as He, is eternal and unchanging.

And herewith is bound up a very solemn thought. The word may be neglected, may be choked, in individual hearts; but still it liveth and abideth, and will appear to testify against the scorners: "He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself" (John xii. 48). But for those who accept the message of the word and live thereby St. Peter's language is full of comfort, especially to those who are in like affliction with these Asian Christians. For them the acceptance of the faith of Jesus must have meant the rending asunder of earthly ties; the natural brotherhood would be theirs no longer. But they are enrolled in a new family, a family which cannot perish, whose seed is incorruptible, whose kinship shall stretch forward and be ever enlarging through all time and into eternity. For they, like the word by which they are begotten again, will live and abide for evermore.

And confirming this lesson by the prophecy of Isaiah (xl. 6-8), the Apostle thus links together the ancient Scriptures and the New Testament. But in so doing he shows by his language how he regards the latter as more excellent and a mighty advance upon the former. The margin of the Revised Version helpfully indicates the difference of the words. In Isaiah the teaching is styled a *saying*. It was the word whereby God, through some intermediary, made known His will to the children of men. But under the Gospel the word is that living, spiritual power which is used as

synonymous with the Lord Himself. The word of good tidings has now been spoken unto men by a Son, the very image of the Divine substance, the effulgence of God's glory, and now possesses a might quick even to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is verily the living word of God (Heb. iv. 12).

And we of to-day can see what ground there was for the Apostle's faith and for his teaching, how true the prophetic word has been found in the events of history. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: but the word of the Lord abideth for ever." When we cast our thoughts back to the time when St. Peter wrote, we see the converts who had accepted the word of God a mere handful of people amid the throngs of heathendom, the religion which they professed the scorn of all about them, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness, and its preachers in the main a few poor, untrained, uninfluential men, of no rank or conspicuous ability. On the other hand, worshipping crowds proclaimed the greatness of Diana of the Ephesians; and the power of the Roman empire was at its height, or seemed so, with the whole of the civilised world owning its sway. And now that world's wonder, the temple at Ephesus, is a pile of ruins, and over the Roman power such changes have passed that it has utterly faded out of existence; but the doctrines of the Galilean, who claimed to be the Incarnate Word of God, are daily extending their influence, proving their vitality to be Divine.

But though in his language he has seemed to mark the superiority of the Gospel message, the Apostle is deeply conscious that the office of the preacher has much, nay its chief character, in common with that of

the prophet. Hence he proceeds to call the Gospel message, now that it is left to lips of Evangelists and Apostles to proclaim, a *saying* like that of Isaiah. In this way he links the New Testament to the Old, the prophet to the preacher. Both spake the same word of God; both were moved by the same spirit; both proclaimed the same deliverance, the one looking onward in hope to the coming Redeemer, the other proclaiming that the redemption had been accomplished. "This is the telling" (the saying) "of good tidings which was preached unto you."

Here St. Peter seems to allude to a preaching earlier than his own, and to none can we attribute the evangelisation of these parts of Asia with more probability than to St. Paul and his missionary colleagues. But there was no note of disagreement between these early ambassadors of Christ. They could all say of their work, "Whether it were I or they, so we preached, and so ye believed."

Having spoken of the seed, the Apostle now turns to the seed-plot which needs its special preparation. It must be cleared and broken up, or the seed, though scattered, will have small chance of roothold.

But here St. Peter recurs to his former metaphor. He has spoken (i. 13) of the Christian's equipment, how with girded loins he should prepare himself for the coming struggle. He now speaks of what he must lay aside. He has been purified, or made to long after purification, through his obedience to the truth, so that he can with earnest desire seek to make known his love to the brethren; and the word of God is powerful to overcome such dispositions as are destructive of brotherly love. Hence it is to no hopeless, unaided conflict that the Apostle urges his converts when he

writes of their *putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings.* It is a formidable list of evils, but St. Peter's words treat them as forming no part of the true man. These are overgrowths, which can be stripped away, though the operation will many a time be painful enough; they have enveloped and enclosed the sinner, and cling close about him, but the sanctification of the Spirit can help him to be unclothed of them all. They are the forces which make for discord. The word of good tidings began with "peace on earth, goodwill towards men." Hence those who hearken to the message must put away everything contrary thereto. First in the Apostle's enumeration stands a general term, *wickedness*, those which follow it being various forms of its development. We learn how utterly alien this *wickedness* is to the spirit of Christ when we notice the employment of the word to describe the sin of Simon: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right before God" (Acts viii. 22). Such a man had no comprehension of the source of the apostolic powers; the sacred things of God were unknown to one who could treat such gifts as merchandise. And it is full of interest in the present connexion to observe that what our English version there renders "matter" is really, as the margin (R.V.) shows, "word." It was the word of God which was mighty in the first preachers, which was growing and prevailing as they testified unto Christ, and in this "word" a heart like Simon's could have no share. He was no fit member of the fellowship of Christ.

Guile was the sin of Jacob, a sin which brake the bond of brotherhood between him and Esau, and

wrought so much misery in the whole of Jacob's family history. Guile was not found in Nathanael. The searching eye of Jesus saw that the sin of the "supplanter" was not in him. Hence he is pointed out as an example of the true Israel, that which the race of Jacob was intended to become.

That *hypocrisy* is a foe to brotherhood our Lord makes evident as he reproaches the Pharisees for this sin. "I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, nor even as this publican," are words which could never rise to the lips of him whose heart was purified by the Spirit of God; and envy brings hatred in its train. It was by envy that Saul was incited to seek the death of David; it was from envy that Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt; through envy a greater than Joseph was sold to be crucified (Matt. xxvii. 18), and this sin led to war in heaven itself.

From *evil-speaking* these Asian converts themselves had to suffer, and would know by experience its mischievous effects. They were spoken against as evil-doers, as the Apostle notes twice over (1 Peter ii. 12, iii. 15). This evil adds cowardice to its other baneful qualities, for it takes advantage of the absence of him against whom it is directed, and is that vice which in 2 Cor. xii. 20 is described as *backbiting*, a rendering which the Revised Version leaves undisturbed, while those who indulge in it are called *backbiters* (Rom. i. 30). St. James has much to say in its dispraise: "Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother or judgeth his brother speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law" (James iv. 11). Such a one is intruding into the prerogative of God Himself, and passing sentence where he can have no sure knowledge of the acts which he judges.

"Evil-speaking," says one of the Apostolic Fathers,[1] "is a restless demon, never at peace. So speak no evil of any, nor take pleasure in listening thereto." By good works St. Peter instructs his converts to live down such cowardly slanders, that those who revile their good manner of life in Christ may be put to shame thereby. Purity will overcome iniquity, innocence gain the day against deceit.

But the transformation to which the Apostle exhorts them must be verily to become a new creation, and so he goes on to speak of their condition as one akin to that of new-born babes. These by natural instincts turn away from all that will hurt them, and seek only what can nourish and support. To such right inclinations, to such simplicity of desire, must the Christian be brought. He has been born again of the word of God. From this he is to seek his constant nurture, as instinctively as the babe turns to its mother's breast. This is able to save the soul (James i. 21), but it cannot be received unless the vices which war against it be put away, and a spirit of meekness take their place. They seek other and less pure food for their support.

Christians are to *long for the spiritual milk which is without guile.* This food for babes in Christ is the word, which is taken by the Spirit and offered a nurture for the soul. But there must be a longing for, a readiness to accept, what is offered. For the spiritual appeals to the reason of man, and though offered, is not forced on him. The Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. And the purification, the clearing off and putting away corrupt

[1] Hermas, Mand. ii. 2.

dispositions, about which the Apostle speaks so earnestly, applies an eye-salve to the inward vision which helps us to see things in their true light, and so to long for what is really profitable food without guile, which does not disappoint the hope of those that seek it. *That ye may grow thereby unto salvation.* It is called the word of salvation. "To you," says St. Paul to the men of Antioch (Acts xiii. 26), is the word of this salvation sent forth; and through it is proclaimed the remission of sins. The healthy condition of the life of the soul is evidenced by these two signs: longing for proper food and growth by partaking thereof. For there is no standing still in spiritual life, any more than in the natural life. Where there is no growth, decay has already set in; if there be no waxing of the powers, they have already begun to wane. To the natural human growth there must needs come this waning; the body will decay: but the spiritual increase can continue, must continue, until the stature of the fulness of Christ be attained, till we come to be made like unto Him when we see Him as He is. Watch, then, strive and pray for growth, *if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* The true food once found and appreciated, the joy of this support will be such that no other will ever be desired. Hence St. Peter adopts, or rather adapts, the words of the Psalmist (xxxiv. 9) who tells of the blessedness of trusting in the Lord. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and setteth them free. This is the initial stage: the deliverance from the power of evil. Then come the desire and longing for the true strength. "O taste and see that the Lord is gracious; blessed is the man that findeth refuge in Him." The joy of such a refuge can come even to those who are

suffering after the fashion of the Asian converts. But the Psalmist's words are full of teaching. God's training is empirical. Spiritual experience comes before spiritual knowledge. Well does St. Bernard say of this lesson, though his words pass the power of translation, "Unless you have tasted you will not see. The food is the hidden manna; it is the new name which no one knows but he who receives it. It is not external training, but the unction of the Spirit, which teaches; it is not knowledge (*scientia*) which grasps the truth, but the conscience (*conscientia*) which attests it."

VI

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

VI

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

"Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because it is contained in Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame. For you therefore which believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."—1 PETER ii. 4–10.

LEAVING the exhortation to individual duties, the Apostle turns now to describe the Christian society in relation to its Divine Founder, and tells both of the privileges possessed by believers, and of the services which they ought to render. He employs for illustration a figure very common in Holy Scripture, and compares the faithful to stones in the structure of some noble edifice, built upon a sure foundation. Such language on his lips must have had a deep significance. He was the rock-man; his name Peter was bestowed by Christ in recognition of his grand

confession: and Jesus had consecrated the simile which the Apostle uses by His own words, "Upon this rock I will build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18), words which were daily finding a blessed fulfilment in the growth of these Asian Churches.

A rock is no unusual figure in the Old Testament to represent God's faithfulness, and its use is specially frequent in Isaiah and the Psalms. "In the Lord Jehovah is an everlasting rock" (Isa. xxvi. 4), says the prophet; again he calls God "the rock of Israel" (xxx. 29); while the prayers of the Psalmist are full of the same thought concerning the Divine might and protection: "Be Thou my strong rock and my fortress" (Psalm xxxi. 2); "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (lxi. 2); "O God, my rock and my Redeemer" (xix. 14).

But the language of the New Testament goes farther than that of the Old. Strength, protection, permanence—these were attributes of the rock of which Isaiah spake and David sang. The life-possessing and life-imparting virtue of the Spirit of Christ is a part of the glad tidings of the Gospel. Through Him were light and immortality brought to light. The rock which lives is found in Jesus Christ. In Him is life without measure, ready to be imparted to all who seek to be built up in Him.

Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious. By purification of thought, and act, and word, that childlike frame has been sought after which fits them to draw near; and they come with full assurance. Jesus they know as the Crucified, as the Lord who came to His own, and they received Him not. Generations of preparation had not made Jewry ready for her King's coming,

had failed to impress the people with the signs of His advent; and so they disowned Him, and cried, "We have no king but Cæsar." But the converts know Jesus also as Him who was raised from the dead and exalted to glory. This honour He hath "with God." No other than He could bring salvation. Therefore has He received a name that is above every name. And "with God" here signifies that heavenly exaltation and glory. The sense is[1] as when Jesus testifies, "I speak what I have seen *with My Father*" (John viii. 38)—that is, in heaven—or when He prays, "Glorify me, O Father, *with Thine own self*" (xvii. 5). From this excellent glory He sends down His Spirit, and gives to His people a share of that life which has been made manifest in Him. Their part is but to come, to seek; and every one that seeketh is sure to find.

Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house. Not because they are living men does the Apostle speak of them as living stones. They may be full of the vigour of natural life, yet have no part in Christ. The life which joins men to Him comes by the new birth. And the union of believers with Christ makes itself patent by a daily progress. He is a living stone; they are to be made more and more like Him by a constant drawing near, a constant drinking in from His fulness of the life which is the light of men. In this light new graces grow within them; old sins are cast aside. By this preparation, this shaping of the living stones, the Spirit fits Christians for their place in the spiritual building, unites them with one another and with Christ, fashions out of them a true communion of saints—

[1] Παρὰ θεῷ ἐκλεκτόν speaks of Christ in His glory, in that place where the reward of the faithful is kept in store. Cf. the words of Matt. vi. 1.

saints, who, that they may advance in saintliness, have duties to perform both directly to God and for His sake to the world around. By diligence therein the upbuilding goes daily forward.

First, they are *to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* From the day when God revealed His will on Sinai, such has been the ideal set before His chosen servants. "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. xix. 6) stands in the preface of the Divinely given law. And God changes not. Hence the praise of the Lamb's finished work when He has purchased unto God men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation is sung before the throne in the self-same strain: "Thou madest them to be unto God a kingdom and priests" (Rev. v. 10). Under the early dispensation God was leading men up from material sacrifices to pay unto Him true spiritual worship. The Psalmist has learnt the lesson when he pleads, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord" (Psalm iv. 6); and Hosea's sense of what was well-pleasing to God is made clear in his exhortation, "Take with you words and return unto the Lord; say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good, so will we render as bullocks the offering of our lips" (xiv. 3). The Apostle to the Romans is hardly more explicit than this when he urges, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice" (xii. 1), or to the Hebrews, "Let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name" (xiii. 15).

But the Apostles could add to the exhortations of the prophets and psalmists a ground of blessed assur-

ance, could promise how these living sacrifices, these offerings of praise, had gained a certainty of acceptance through Jesus Christ: "Through Him we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in Him" (Eph. iii. 12); and in another place, "Having Him as a great Priest over the house of God," that spiritual house into which believers are builded, "let us draw near with a true heart, in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. x. 22). Thus do believers become priests unto God, in every place lifting up holy hands in prayer, prayer which is made acceptable through their great High-priest.

It was only from oral teaching that these Asian Christians knew of those lessons which we now can quote as the earliest messages to the Church of Christ. The Scripture was to them as yet the Scripture of the Old Testament, and to this St. Peter points them for the confirmation which it supplies. And his quotation is worthy of notice both for its manner and its matter: *Because it is contained in Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.* The passage is from Isaiah (xxviii. 16); but a comparison with that verse shows us that the Apostle has not quoted all the words of the prophet, and that what he has given corresponds much more closely with the Greek of the Septuagint than with the Hebrew. The latter concludes, "He that believeth shall not make haste," and contains some words not represented in the version of the Seventy. The variations which St. Peter accepts are such as to assure us that for him (and the same is true for the rest of the Apostles) the

purport, the spiritual lessons, of the word were all which he counted essential. Neither Christ Himself nor His Apostles adhere in quotation to precise verbal exactness.[1] They felt that there lay behind the older record so many deep meanings for which the fathers of old were not prepared, but which Gospel light made clear. To somewhat of this fuller sense the translators of the Septuagint seem to have been guided.[2] They lived nearer to the rising of the day-star. Through their labours God was in part preparing the world for the message of Christ. The words which Isaiah was guided to use express the confidence of a believer who was looking onward to God's promise as in the future: "He shall not make haste." He knows that the purpose of God will be brought to pass; that, as the prophet elsewhere says, "the Lord will hasten it in its time" (lx. 22). Man is not to step in, Jacob-like, to anticipate the Divine working.

But "shall not be ashamed" was a form of the promise more suited to the days of St. Peter and these infant Churches. For the name of Christ was in many ways made a reproach; and only men of faith, like Moses and the heroes celebrated with him in Heb. xi., could count that reproach greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Other and weaker hearts needed encouragement, needed to be pointed to the privileges and glories which are the inheritance of the followers of Jesus. And in this spirit he applies the prophetic

[1] For illustration of what is here said, Matt. xxi. 16 may be compared with Psalm viii. 2, Acts xv. 15–17 with Amos ix. 11, 12, and Eph. iv. 8 with Psalm lxviii. 18; and the list might be largely increased.

[2] Hence the New Testament writers quote from the LXX. in a very large proportion. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes nothing else.

words, *For you therefore which believe is the preciousness.* Faith makes real all the offers of the Gospel. It opens heaven, as to the vision of St. Stephen, so that while they are still here believers behold the glory of God to which Christ has been exalted, are assured of the victory which has been won for them, and that in His strength they may conquer also. Thus they receive continually the earnest of those precious and exceeding great promises (2 Peter i. 4) whereby they become partakers of the Divine nature.

But all men have not faith. The Bible tells us this on every page. God knows what is in man, and in His revelation He has set forth not only invitations and blessings, but warnings and penalties. Life and good, death and evil—these have been continually proclaimed as linked together by God's law, but ever with the exhortation, "Choose life." Of such warning messages St. Peter gives examples from prophecy and psalm: *But for such as disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner* (Psalm cxviii. 22), *and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence* (Isa. viii. 14); *for they stumble at the word, being disobedient.* Here the Apostle touches the root of the evil. The test of faith is obedience. It was so in Eden; it must be ever so. But now, as then, the tempter comes with his insidious questionings, "Hath God said?" and sowing doubts, he goes his way, leaving them to work; and work they do. Now it is the truth, now the wisdom, of the command, that men stumble at. But in each case they disobey. Those leave it unobserved; these despise and set it at nought. And the penalty is sure. For mark the twofold aspect of God's dealing which is set forth in the passages chosen by St. Peter to enforce his lesson. Spite of

man's disobedience, God's purpose is not thwarted. The stone which He laid in Zion has been made the head of the corner. Though rejected by some builders, it has lost none of its preciousness, none of its strength. Those who draw near unto it find life thereby; are made fit for their places in the Divine building, in the kingdom of the Lord's house which He will most surely establish as the latter days draw on. But they who disobey are overthrown. The despised stone, which is the sure word of God, rises up in men's self-chosen path, and makes them fall, and at the last, if they persist in despising it, will appear for their condemnation.

Whereunto also they were appointed. The Apostle has in mind the words of Isaiah, how the prophet, in that place from which he has just quoted, declares that many shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. This is the lot of the disobedient. These penalties dog that sin. It is the unvarying law of God. The Bible teaches this from first to last, by precepts as well as by examples. The disobedient must stumble. But the Bible does not teach that any were appointed unto disobedience. Such fatalist lessons are alien to God's infinite love. The two ways are set before all men. God tries us thus because He has gifted us above the rest of creation, that we may render Him a willing service. But neither prophet nor Apostle teaches that to stumble is to be finally cast away. Both picture God's mercy in as large terms as those in which St. Paul speaks of the Jews: "Did God cast off His people? God forbid. . . . They, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again" (Rom. xi.).

A hardening in part hath befallen Israel, and to the

Church of Christ there is offered the blessedness which aforetime was to be the portion of the chosen people. But the offer is made on like terms of obedient service, and involves large duties. St. Peter marks the likeness of the two offers by choosing the words of the Old Testament to describe the Christian calling, with its privileges and its duties. Believers in Christ are a peculiar treasure unto God from among all people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation, even as was said to Israel (Exod. xix. 5, 6) when they came out of Egypt and received the Law from Sinai. But among the dispersion, for whom he writes, there were those who had been heathens, as well as the converts from Judaism. That he may show them also to be embraced in the new covenant, and their calling contemplated under the old, the Apostle points to another of God's promises, where Hosea (i. 10; ii. 23) tells of the grace that was ready to be shed forth on them which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Thus all, Jew and Gentile, are to be made one holy fellowship, one people for God's own possession.

And this kingdom of God's priests has its duty to the world as well as unto God. Israel in time past was chosen to be God's witness to the rest of mankind, so that when men saw that no nation had God so nigh unto them as Jehovah was whenever Israel called upon Him, that no nation had statutes and judgements so righteous as all the Law which had been given from Sinai, they might be constrained to say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people," and might themselves be won to the service of a God so present and so holy. And now each member of the Christian body, while offering himself a living sacrifice

to God, while delighting to do His will, while treasuring His law, is to exercise himself in wider duties, that God's glory may be displayed unto all men. One of the psalmists, whose words have been in part referred to Christ Himself, testifies how this priesthood for mankind should be fulfilled: "I have published righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I will not refrain my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest. I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation; I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation" (Psalm xl. 9, 10). These were the excellencies which the Psalmist had found in God's service, and his heart ran over with desire to impart the knowledge unto others. With juster reason shall Christ's servants be prompted to a like evangel. They cannot hold their peace, specially while they consider how great blessings those lose who as yet own no allegiance to their Master.

That ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. This theme fills the rest of the letter. The Apostle teaches that in every condition this duty has its place and its opportunities. Subjects may fulfil it, as they yield obedience to their rulers, servants in the midst of service to their masters, wives and husbands in their family life, each individual in the society where his lot is cast, and specially those who preside over the Christian congregations. Wherever the goodness of God's mercy has been tasted, there should be hearts full of thanksgiving, voices tuned to the praise of Him who has done great things for them. Lives led with this aim will make men to be truly what God designs: a holy nation; a kingdom of priests. And ever as

men walk thus will the kingdom for which we daily pray be brought nearer.

The opportunities for winning men to Christ differ in modern times from those which were open to the earliest Christian converts; but there is still no lack of adversaries, no lack of those by whom the hope of the believer is deemed unreasonable: and now, as then, the good works which the opponents behold in Christian lives will have their efficacy. These cannot for ever be spoken against. A good manner of life in Christ shall, through His grace, finally put the gainsayers to shame. They shall learn, and gain blessing with the lesson, that the stone which they have so long been rejecting has been set up by God to be the foundation of His Church, the head stone of the corner, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

VII

CHRISTIANS AS PILGRIMS IN THE WORLD

VII

CHRISTIANS AS PILGRIMS IN THE WORLD

"Beloved, I beseech you, as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."—1 PETER ii. 11-17.

THE Apostle opens his exhortations with a word eminently Christian: *Beloved.* It is a word whose history makes us alive to and thankful for the Septuagint Version. Without that translation there would have been no channel through which the religious ideas of Judaism could have been conveyed to the minds of the Western peoples. There are several Greek words which signify "to love," but bound up with every one of them is some sense which renders it ill-fitted to describe true Christian love and still less suited for expressing the love of God to man. The word in the text has been fashioned to tell of that love which St. Paul describes in his "more excellent way" (1 Cor. xiii.). In classic speech it implies more of the

outward exhibition of welcome, than of deep affection. But the translators of the Septuagint have taken it specially for themselves, and use it first to express the love of Abraham for Isaac (Gen. xxii. 2); and, thus consecrating and elevating it, they have brought it at length to great dignity, for they employ it to signify the love of the Lord for His people and the highest love of man to God: "The Lord preserveth all them that love Him" (Psalm cxlv. 20); "The Lord loveth the righteous" (cxlvi. 8). So in the New Testament it can be used of the "well-beloved" Son Himself. With such an expression of their union to each other in the Lord does St. Peter preface his admonitions. They are counsels of love.

I beseech you, as sojourners and pilgrims. The Christian looks for a life eternal. In comparison thereof the best things of this time are of little account, while the evil of the world renders it no safe resting-place. It is but as a lodging for a brief night, and at dawn the traveller sets forward for his true home. Hence the argument of the apostolic entreaty. You have no long time to stay, and none to waste; your motto is ever, "Onward!" *I beseech you to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.* Of the perils of life's journey the Psalmist gives us a telling sketch in the first verse of Psalm i.; and if we may accept the words as the outcome of David's experience, they teach us the subtlety of these lusts of the flesh, as they war against the soul. They had led David to adultery and murder. The first stage of the course through which they carry you is described as walking by the counsel of the ungodly. It is not being of their number, but only being ready to accept their advice; and though the course has begun, it is still possible

for him who walks to turn round and to turn back. The next step shows captivation. The man stands in the way of sinners, not afraid of his company now, though they have a taint of positive guilt instead of the negative character of ungodliness. But the war against the soul goes on; and the captive at the next stage sinks down willingly, is pleased with his chains, sits in the seat of the scorners, as ready now as they to make a mock at sin. With good reason does St. Peter use most solemn words of entreaty. The peril at all times is great. The flesh warreth against the spirit. We cannot do the things that we would. But for these men the danger was extreme. Some of them had lived in surroundings where such sins were counted a part of religious duty; had the support of long prescription; were sanctioned and indulged in by those of the convert's own blood.

Yet the Apostle does not counsel the new-made Christians to run away from this battle. They owe a duty to those who are out of the way, and must not shrink from it, be it ever so painful: *having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles.* Their lives are to be led in the sight of their fellow-men, to be so led as to have the approval of a clear conscience, and to be void of offence in the eyes of others. This outward seemliness is what Christian love exhibits as a testimony to Christ's grace and an attraction unto the world, making known unto all men the unsearchable riches of Christ: *that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* The seemly conduct of believers must be continuous, or it will fail of its effect. It is not one display of Christian conduct, nor occasional spasmodic manifestations

thereof, which will win men to love the way of Christ. And this is the result without which Christ's people are not to rest satisfied. The evil reports of the adversaries are ill-grounded, but they do not think so; and the only means of removing their perverse view is by a continuous revelation of the excellence of Christ's service. They may rail, but we must bless; they may persecute: we must not retaliate, but returning good always for their evil, make them see at length that this way which they are attacking has a character and a power to which they have been strangers. This enlightenment is implied in the word "behold": *They behold your good works.* It denotes initiation into a mystery. And to unbelievers Christ's religion must be a mystery. The clearing of the vision leads them up to faith. The word in every place where it occurs in the New Testament is St. Peter's own, and he employs it once (2 Peter i. 16) to describe the vision, the insight, into the glory of Christ, which he and his fellows gained at the Transfiguration. Such a sight removes all questionings, and constrains the enlightened soul to join in the exclamation, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." The victory for Christ is to be won on the very ground where the opposition was made. In the very matter over which the enemy reviled, there shall they praise God for that which they erewhile maligned. This it is which constitutes their day of visitation. Some have thought the visitation intended was to be one of punishment for obstinate withstanding of the truth, but it surely harmonises better with the glory of God that the dispensation should be one of instruction and light. We seem to have a notable example of what is meant in the history of St. Paul. He in all earnestness persecuted the Way unto the

death. The day of visitation came to him, a day which, while darkening the bodily vision, gave a clearness to the soul. The persecutor became the Apostle to the Gentiles, and the world bore him witness that now he preached the faith of which he had once made havoc (Gal. i. 23). This was God's own conquest, but in the same manner will believers be helped to win their victory. They are to aim at nothing less, never to rest content till the accusers of their good deeds are brought to glory in the performance of the same. So was Justin Martyr won to the side of Christianity: "When I heard the Christians accused and saw them fearless of death and of everything else that is counted fearful, I was sure they could not be living in wickedness and in the love of pleasures" (2 Apol. xii.). Well-doing shall not fail of its reward. Men will testify, as of Isaac of old, "We saw plainly that the Lord was with thee, and we said, Let there now be an oath betwixt us" (Gen. xxvi. 28).

The Apostle now turns to one illustration of Christian behaviour wherein the converts might be tempted to think themselves absolved from some portion of their duty. They were living under heathen rulers. Did their freedom in Christ release them from obligations to the civil powers? The question was sure to arise. St. Peter supplies both a rule and a reason: *Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.* Christians, just as other men, hold their place in the commonweal. All that the state requires citizens to do in aid of good government, order, the support of institutions and the like, will fall upon them, as upon others. Whether the demands made upon them in this wise be always for ends of which they would approve, they are not to discuss so long as their rulers provide

duly for the social order and welfare. This is the apostolic rule. The reason is, Men are to submit thus for the Lord's sake. The powers that be are ordained of God, and He would have obedience yielded to them. The Bible knows nothing about forms of government; these are to be ordered as men at various times and under various conditions deem most helpful. But the Bible doctrine is that God uses all powers of the world for His own purposes and to work out His will. Of Pharaoh, who had deliberately despised God's messages through Moses, the Divine voice declared that he would long ago have been cut off from the earth, but was made to stand that he might show God's power, and that His name might be declared throughout all the earth (Exod. ix. 15, 16); and of the Assyrian at a later day (Isa. x. 10, 12) God tells how he was used as the rod of the Divine anger, but that the fruit of his stout heart and the glory of his high looks would surely be punished. God employs for His ends instruments with which He is not always well-pleased. These can inflict His penalties, yea even may be made to advance His glory. Pilate was assured by Christ Himself that the power which he was about to exercise was only by Divine permission: "Thou wouldest have no power against Me except it were given thee from above" (John xix. 11); and St. Paul enforces obedience to authorities equally with St. Peter: "He that resisteth the power withstandeth the ordinance of God" (Rom. xiii. 2). Be subject, therefore, *whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well.* The order under which these converts were living was superintended by some officer appointed by the Roman emperor, and to this

the form of the Apostle's words applies. The king is the Cæsar; the governor is the procurator or subordinate official by whom the imperial power was represented in the provinces. When St. Peter wrote, Nero ruled in Rome, and was represented abroad by ministers often of a like character.

How extreme must after this be the case of those who would claim freedom to resist the rulers under whom they live. God has allowed them to stand, He is using them for His own purposes, they may be the ministers of His vengeance, and to Him alone does vengeance belong. He intends them also to recognise the merit of the doers of good. It may be that they do not fulfil God's intent in either wise, yet while He suffers them to keep their power the Christian's duty is obedience to every civil enactment, for anarchy would be a curse both to him and to others, bringing in its train more hurt than help. When Christians shall be found among those who abide by the law of the lands wherein they dwell, even should their faith not be accepted by their rulers, their good citizenship will hardly fail to disarm hatred and abate persecution. And so they are to range themselves ever on the side of order. *For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* For this end believers are to abide in the world, that through them the world may be renewed. The opponents of their faith suffer, says the Apostle, from lack of knowledge. As he says in another place, "they rail in matters whereof they are ignorant" (2 Peter ii. 12). Had men known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; and did they know, they would not persecute His followers. But knowledge will not come without a preacher. Such preachers of the excellence

of their faith shall the law-abiding Christians in each community be made. They shall publish the lessons of their own experience; they shall win favour by their example. The world will recognise that these men have a secret which others do not possess, will find that they yield obedience to earthly rulers because they are above all things servants of God. It was through convicting them of their ignorance that Jesus put the Sadducees to silence. "Ye do err," was His argument, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. xxii. 34). And when men are made sensible of such ignorance, they are silenced for very shame (1 Cor. xv. 34). This word "silenced" is very expressive both in the Gospel and here. It implies that a bridle or muzzle is put upon the mouth of ignorance, so that it may either be guided into a better way, or, if not so, be checked from doing harm. For some there are who not only will be ignorant, but foolish also, whom no teaching will profit. But even these will in the end be silenced. So, as says the brother Apostle, "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 21).

The first part of the Apostle's exhortation in our verse had in view, it may be, more especially the Gentile converts. Their past life had been one of evil-doing in the sight of God; those whom they had left, and who were most likely to be their adversaries, were still walking in the same ways, and were to be won over and conquered for Christ. He now turns more directly to those who had been Jews. These were no longer bound to the observance of the ceremonial law, and we know from the New Testament as well as from Church history that with this release there were exhibited in the lives of many such excesses as made

them a disgrace to the Christian name. We find much about these in the Second Epistle. St. Peter would not keep the Jewish converts under the burden of the Law, but he warns them against their besetting danger: *as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God.* There were bad Jews, even as there have been bad Christians. These would welcome a rule which set them at liberty from the Mosaic observances, to which their adherence aforetime had been in outward seeming rather than in earnest zeal. To these St. Peter preaches that to lay aside Judaism is not to embrace Christianity. The Leader of the new faith had ever taught a different lesson. He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it, and to set forth God's will in a nobler aspect. Those who would follow Him must take up the cross. His service is a yoke which restrains from all evil. Those who come to Christ come as bondservants of God, free only because they are bound to the observance of the noblest law. They must lay aside the flesh, with its affections and lusts, and not vindicate their freedom by using it as an occasion to riot and self-indulgence.

And the Apostle binds together all his teaching in four closing precepts: *Honour all men; Love the brotherhood; Fear God; Honour the king.* All men, without distinction, are to be honoured, because in all there remains the image of God. It may be defaced, blurred exceedingly. The more needful is it to deal considerately with such, that we may help to restore what has been marred. Those who are our brethren in Christ, the brotherhood, we shall own with affection, seeking to be of one heart and one soul with them, because they belong to Christ. For them we shall

have, if we be true to our faith, that mighty love which passeth in excellence both faith and hope. But the exhortation of St. Peter speaks in this wise: Ye who hold your brethren in Christ unspeakably dear, do not allow that love to suffice, to swallow up all regard for other men. They also need your thoughts, your help. The heathen, the unbelievers—these have the strongest possible claim, even their great need. And so with the other pair of precepts. Ye who fear God, which is your foremost duty, do not let that fear lessen your willingness to do honour to your earthly rulers. The feelings toward God and the king differ in character and in degree, but both have their place in proper share in the heart of the true servant of Christ.

VIII

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

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Servants, be in subjection to your masters, with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted *for it*, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well and suffer *for it*, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not; but committed *Himself* to Him that judgeth righteously; who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."—1 PETER ii. 18-25.

THE Gospel history shows very clearly that during our Lord's lifetime His followers were drawn largely from the ranks of the poor. It was fitting that He who had been proclaimed in prophecy as "the Servant of the Lord" should enter the world in humble estate; and, from the lowly position of the virgin-mother and her husband, the life of Jesus for thirty years must have been spent in comparative poverty and amid poor surroundings. The major part of His chosen disciples were fisherfolk and such-like. And though we read of the wife of Herod's steward among the women who ministered unto Him and of the richer Joseph of

Arimathæa as a secret disciple, these are marked exceptions. To the poor His Gospel was preached, and among the poor it first made its way. The question of the chief priests, "Hath any of the rulers believed on Him, or the Pharisees?" (John vii. 48), tells its own tale, as does also the significant record, "The common people heard Him gladly" (Mark xii. 37).

It need not therefore much surprise us if St. Peter, now that he begins to classify his counsels, addresses himself first to "household servants": *Servants, be in subjection to your masters, with all fear.* We have, however, to bear in mind, as we consider the Apostle's exhortation, that most of those whom he addresses were slaves. They had no power of withdrawing themselves, though their service should prove burdensome and grievous. St. Paul, in writing to the same class, nearly always employs the word which means "bondservants" Yet his counsel agrees with St. Peter's. Thus he exhorts that their service be "with fear and trembling" (Eph. vi. 5); in Col. iii. 22, "Obey in all things them that are your masters." And to Timothy and Titus it is given as a part of their charge to "exhort servants to be in subjection to their own masters and to be well-pleasing to them in all things" (1 Tim. vi. 1; Titus ii. 9).

When St. Peter and St. Paul wrote, this slave population was everywhere very numerous. Gibbon calculates that in the reign of Claudius the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world; Robertson places the estimate much higher. These formed, then, a very large share of the public to which the first preachers had to appeal, and we can understand the importance to the Christian cause of the behaviour of these humble, but doubtless

most numerous, members of the society. Their lives would be a daily sermon in the houses of their masters. Hence the very earnest exhortations addressed to them that by their conduct they should adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; that they should count their masters worthy of all honour; that the name of God and of the doctrine be not blasphemed; that they should be in subjection *with all fear*. Everything in the New Testament concerning slaves goes to show that they were a most important factor in the early Christian societies.

Men wonder nowadays that there is so little said by any of the Apostles about freeing slaves from their bondage. The best men in those times and long before appear to have regarded slavery as one of the institutions with which they were bound to rest content. It flourished everywhere; it was countenanced in the Scriptures of the older dispensation. Eleazar was Abraham's slave, and the Law in many passages contemplates the possession by Israelites of persons who were bought with their money. Hence we find no remonstrance against slave-holding in the New Testament writings, only advice to those who were in such bondage to cultivate a spirit which would render it less galling and to strive that by their behaviour the cause of Christ might be advanced. St. Paul represents the ideas of his age when, writing to the Corinthians, he says, "Wast thou called being a bondservant? Care not for it; but if thou canst be made free, use *it* rather" (1 Cor. vii. 21). Freedom was worth having, but any heroic effort to get rid of the yoke is not encouraged in the Epistles. Yet it must have been a lot which called for the exercise of much moral strength to make it bearable. Even from the house of the Christian

Philemon the slave Onesimus found cause to run away. But St. Paul in his letter admits no right on the slave's part to take this course. With the Apostle there is no question that the first duty is to go back to his master. All that he urges is that the common profession of Christianity by slave and master ought to, and doubtless would, alleviate the conditions of servitude. There were in Christianity, as time has shown, germs which would fructify, a spirit which some day would strike off the chains of slaves. But the vision of such a time had not dawned either for St. Paul or St. Peter. Christ has overcome the world in many other matters beside slavery. It is only that Christians are so tardy in awaking to the fulness of His lessons.

So in apostolic days the rights and claims of slave-masters were looked upon as indisputable. Be subject, *not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.* There is to be no resistance, no lapse in duty. About service rendered to good masters there might be little apprehension, but even here St. Paul finds occasion for warning. "They that have believing masters," he says, "let them not despise them because they are brethren" (1 Tim. vi. 2). Christian freedom was not without its dangers in many forms, especially to minds wherein liberty was a strange idea. But froward masters are to be faithfully served likewise, and care is to be taken withal to remove every occasion for their frowardness. The apostolic lesson is to make suffering endurable, noble, acceptable to God, by seeing that it be always undeserved. How strange a doctrine this in the eyes of the world! The rule of purely human conduct would be just the opposite. If wrong be undeserved, rebel at once. Christianity supplies a

motive for the contrary course: *conscience toward God.* The world's spirit is not His spirit, and to have praise with Him should be the Christian's single aim. Men can at times be patient when rebuke is deserved, but the world sees that that deserves no credit. "What thank have ye?" they cry. But they give no praise for the bearing of unmerited rebuke.

The world counts such conduct weakness, and is still far from comprehending the Divineness of the virtue of yielding patiently to wrong. God has long been teaching the lesson, but it has been slowly learnt. He chose the milder, timid Jacob rather than the fiery Esau. Both had faults in multitude. With the world Esau is oft the favourite. At a later day He stamps with approval the noble mercy of David in sparing Saul, while round Daniel and his companions in Babylon there gathers something of a halo of New Testament sanctity by reason of the noble confession which they made under persecution. These are chapters in the Divine lesson-book. Such lives marked stages in the preparation for the Servant of the Lord. Men, if they would have hearkened, were being trained to estimate such a character at God's value. Now Christ's example is before us, and we are bidden to follow it.

For hereunto were ye called. Strange invitation to be dictated by love, a call to suffering! And yet the Master at first promises nothing else to His followers: "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. xvi. 24). And what can a Christian wish for but to be like Christ? And the very reason given ought to make us love the cross. We are called unto suffering because Jesus suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. He has trodden the

hard road, the winepress of the wrath of God, alone and for men. At this point the Apostle begins to apply to Christ Isaiah's description of the suffering "Servant of the Lord," "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (Isa. liii.). But soon the memory of the scenes he had witnessed is present with him; and his words, though holding to the spirit of Isaiah's picture, become a description of what he himself had seen and heard when Jesus was taken and crucified: *Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.* How the brief words sum up and recall the dark history—Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod; the mockery, the scourging, the railing crowd, the dying Jesus, and the parting prayer, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

So far the Apostle speaks of the example of Christ, which, though far above and beyond us, we are exhorted and called on to follow. And there are many who will go with him thus far who value our Lord's work only for its lofty example. Indeed, it is characteristic of those who deny the mediatorial office of Christ to be loudest in magnifying the grandeur of His character. To His good works, His love for men, His spotless life, His noble lessons, they accord untiring praise, as though thereby they would atone for denying Him that office which is more glorious still. But St. Peter stops at no such half-way house. He knows in whom he has believed, knows Him for the Son of the living God, a Teacher with whom were the words of eternal life. So in pregnant words he sets forth the doctrine of the Atonement as the end of Christ's suffering: *Who His own self bare our sins in His own body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might*

live unto righteousness. He bare our sins. The words tell of something beyond our powers to comprehend; but some light is shed on them by a kindred passage (Matt. viii. 17), where the Evangelist applies to the work of Jesus those other words from Isa. liii., "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." The narrative in the Gospel has just recorded how Jesus wrought many miracles. First a leper was healed, then the centurion's servant, next Simon's wife's mother, and afterwards many sick and demoniacs beside. There is no record here of the effect produced on Jesus Himself by these exhibitions of miraculous power, but from other passages in the Gospels we do find that He was conscious in Himself of a demand on His power when such cures were wrought. Thus we are told, at the cure of the woman with the issue, that Jesus perceived in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth (Mark v. 30); and again when many were cured, that "power came forth from Him and healed them all" (Luke vi. 19). Of the woman Jesus says expressly, "Thy faith hath made thee whole"; and the manifestation of eagerness to touch Jesus is a sign of the faith of the others whom the Divine power blessed with health.

The Bible recognises everywhere the analogy between sin and sickness. May we not trace some analogy between the Lord's works of healing and that mightier deliverance from sin won by Christ upon the cross, an analogy which may help, if but a little, to give meaning to the bearing by Christ of human sins? A power went forth when the sick were healed; and through that imparted power they were restored to health, faith being the pathway which brought the Divine virtue to their aid. Thus Jesus bore their diseases and took

them away. Look through this figure on the work of our redemption. Christ has borne the burden of sin. He has died for sin that men may die from sin, that sin may be slain in us, the fell disease healed by the power of His suffering. We cannot comprehend what was done for the sick when Christ was on earth, nor what is wrought for sinners by His grace in heaven. Those alone who reap the blessing know its certainty; and they can but say, as the blind man whose sight was restored, "One thing I know: that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John ix. 25).

To this teaching, that Christ's suffering wrought man's rescue, St. Peter adds emphasis by another quotation from that chapter of Isaiah which he has so much in mind: *by whose stripes ye were healed.* Christ was stricken, and God grants to His sufferings a power to heal the souls of those whom He loves because they strive to love Him. Healing through wounds! Soundness through that which speaks only of injury! Mysterious dispensation! But long ago it had been foreshadowed, and shown also how little connexion there was to be, except through faith, between the remedy and the disease. Those who were bitten of the serpents in the wilderness gazed on the brazen serpent, and were healed. In the dead brass was no virtue, but God was pleased to make of it a speaking sacrament; so has it pleased Him to give healing of sins to those who by faith appropriate the sacrifice on Calvary. Christ has claimed the type for Himself: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself" (John xii. 32).

And now, as is so often his wont, St. Peter varies the figure. The wounded sinner finding cure becomes the wandering sheep that has been brought back into

the fold: *For ye were going astray like sheep, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.* But the message, the teaching, the love, is all the same. He who before was the great Exemplar, whose footsteps we should follow, is now the Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, who goes before His sheep. This Shepherd has been a Sufferer, too. He has given Himself up as a prey to the wolves that His flock might be saved. Now, with a voice of love, He calls His sheep by name; and hearing, they follow Him.

But He is more than this. Brought within the fold, the sheep still need His care; and it is freely given. He is the Bishop, the Overseer, the Watchman for His people's safety, who, having gathered them within the fold, tends them with constant watchfulness. The figure passes over thus into the reality in the Apostle's closing words. The cure which the great Healer desires to acccomplish is in the souls of men. For them His care is bestowed, first to bring them safe out of the way of evil, then for ever to keep them under the sheltering care of His abundant love.

IX

CHRISTIAN WIVES AND HUSBANDS

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"In like manner, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behaviour of their wives; beholding your chaste behaviour *coupled* with fear. Whose *adorning* let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible *apparel* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror.

"Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with *your wives* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered."—1 PETER iii. 1-7.

THE Apostle gave at first (ii. 13) the rule of Christian submission generally; then proceeded to apply it to the cases of citizens and of servants. In the same way he now gives injunctions concerning the behaviour of wives and husbands. The precept with which he began holds good for them also. *In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.* The life and teaching of Jesus had wrought a great change in the position of women, a change which can be observed from the earliest days of Christianity. We can gather in what estimation women were generally

held among the Jews at that time from the expression used in the account of our Lord's interview with the woman of Samaria. There it is said (John iv. 27) that the disciples marvelled that Jesus was talking with a woman. Such a feeling must afterwards have been entirely dispelled, for all through the earthly life of Christ we find Him attended by women who ministered unto Him; we read of His close friendship with Mary and Martha, and are told, at the time of His death (Matt. xxvii. 55), that many women beheld the Crucifixion afar off, having followed Him from Galilee. Women were the earliest visitors to the tomb on the great Easter morning, and to them, among the first (Luke xxiv. 22), was the Lord's resurrection made known.

We are not surprised, therefore, in the history of the infant Church, to read (Acts i. 14) that women were present among the disciples who waited at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, nor to learn how the daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts xxi. 9) took a share in the labours of their father for the cause of Christ, or that Priscilla (Acts xviii. 26), equally with her husband, was active in Christian good offices. Other examples occur in the Acts of the Apostles: Dorcas, Lydia, and the mother of Timothy; and the constant mention of women which we find in the salutations with which St. Paul concludes his letters makes it clear how large a part they played in the early propagation of the faith. "Fellow-workers," "servants of the Church," "labourers in the Lord," are among the terms which the Apostle applies to them; and we know from the Pastoral Epistles what help the primitive Church derived from the labours of its deaconesses and widows.

To be occupied in such duties was sure to give to women an influence which they had never possessed before; and the women converts, in countries such as these Asiatic provinces, were exposed to the same sort of danger which beset the slave population at their acceptance of the Christian faith. They might begin to think meanly of others, even of their own husbands, if they were still content to abide in heathenism. Such women might incline at times to take counsel for their life's guidance with Christian men among the various congregations to which they belonged and to set a value on their advice above any which they could obtain from their own husbands. They might come to entertain doubts also whether they ought to maintain the relations of married life with their heathen partners. With the knowledge that such cases might occur, St. Peter gives his lesson. And as in the case of slaves, so here, he gives no countenance to the idea that to become a Christian breaks off previous relations. Wives, though they have accepted the faith, have wifely duties still. Like Christian citizens living in a heathen commonwealth, they are not by religion released from their previously contracted obligations; they are to abide in their estate, and use it, if it may be done, for the furtherance of the cause of Christ. Be in subjection to *your own* husbands; they have still their claim on your duty.

There is much gentleness in the Apostle's next words. He knows that there may arise cases where believing wives have husbands who are heathen. But he speaks hopefully, as thinking they would not be of frequent occurrence: *even if any obey not the word.* Wives, especially if they be of such a character as the Apostle would have them be, could not have been won

to the faith of Christ without much converse with their husbands on so deep a subject; and the word which was working effectually in the one would often have its influence with the other. It might not always be so. But husbands, though not obeying the word as yet, are not to be despaired of.

And here we may turn aside to dwell on the tone of hope in which St. Peter speaks of these husbands who obey not. For the word ἀπειθοῦντες, by which they are described, is the same that is used in ii. 18 of those who stumble at the word, being disobedient. The lesson here given to Christian wives, not to despair of winning their husbands for Christ, gives warrant for what was said on the former passage: that the disobedience which causes men to stumble need not last for ever, nor imply final obduracy and rejection from God's grace. But this by the way.

The Apostle adds the strongest motive to confirm wives in holding to their married state: *That the husbands may without the word be gained by the behaviour of their wives: beholding your chaste behaviour coupled with fear.* "Without the word" here means that there is to be no discussion. They are so to live as to make their lives a sermon without words, to work conviction without debate; then, when the victory is won, there will remain no trace of combat: all will tell of gain, and nothing of loss.

And once again St. Peter uses his special word (ἐποπτένειν) as he describes how the husbands shall be affected by the behaviour of their wives. They shall gaze on it as a mystery, the key to which they do not possess. The wives in heathen homes must have been obliged to hear and see many things which were grievous and distasteful. The husbands could

hardly fail to know that it was so. If, then, they still found wifely regard and respect, wifely submission, with no assertion of a law of their own, no comparison of the lives of Christian men with those of their own husbands, if a silent, consistent walk were all the protest which the Christian wives offered against their heathen environments, such a life could hardly fail of its effect. There must be a powerful motive, a mighty, strengthening power, that enabled women to abide uncomplainingly in their estate. For this the husbands would surely search, and in their search would learn secrets to which they were strangers, would learn how the tongue was restrained where remonstrance might seem more natural, how pure life was maintained in spite of temptations to laxity, and the marriage bond exalted with religious observance even when reverence for the husband was meeting with no equal return. Such lives would be more powerful than oratory, have a charm beyond resistance, would win the husbands first to wonder, then to praise, and in the end to imitation.

And from describing the grace of such a life the Apostle turns to contrast it with other adornments of which the world thinks highly. *Whose adorning*, he says, *let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, and of putting on apparel.* We can see from the catalogue in Isaiah (iii. 18–23) that the daughters of Zion in old days had gone to great lengths in this outside bravery, and provoked the Lord to smite them. These had forgotten the simplicity of Sarah. But that in the house of Abraham there were found no such ornaments is hardly to be believed. The patriarch, who sent (Gen. xxiv. 53) to Rebekah jewels of silver and jewels of gold, did not leave his own wife unadorned. Nor does the language of St. Peter

condemn Rebekah's bracelets, if they be worn with Rebekah's modesty. The New Testament does not teach us to neglect or despise the body. A misrendering in the Authorised Version, "Who shall change our vile body" (Phil. iii. 21), has long seemed to lend countenance to such a notion. It is one of the gains of the Revised Version that we now read in that place, "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation." Sin has robbed the body of its primal dignity, but it is to be restored and made like unto the body of Christ's glory. And He did not despise the body when He deigned to wear it that He might draw nearer unto us. If these things be present to our thoughts, we shall seek to bestow on the body whatever may make it comely. The mischief arises when the adornment of the outer brings neglect of the inner man, when fine apparel has for its companions the haughtiness, the stretched-forth necks, and wanton eyes which Isaiah rebukes. Then it is that it rightly comes under condemnation. When the jewel is (as Rebekah's was) the gift of some dear one—a parent, a husband, a near kinsman—it rouses grateful reminiscences, and may fitly be prized, and holily worn, and ranked near to the rings of betrothal and of marriage.

Let these be the feelings which regulate womanly adornment, and it may be made a part of the culture of the heart, the inner man, which St. Peter urges the Christian wives to be careful to adorn: Let your adorning *be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* All Scripture regards man as of twofold nature, the outward and the inward, of which the latter is the more precious. He is a Jew who is one inwardly (Rom. ii. 29); the inward man

delighteth in the law of God (Rom. vii. 22); while the outward man perishes the inward man may be renewed day by day (2 Cor. iv. 16), being strengthened with power through God's Spirit. This hidden man is the centre from which all the strength of Christian life comes. Let this be rightly adorned, and the outward life will need no strict rules; there will be no fear of excess, least of all when the inner life is cared for because it is precious before God. Its pure array passeth gold and gems, be they ever so beautiful. This is a grace which never fades, but will flourish through eternity.

The Apostle proceeds to commend it by a noble example. The Old Testament Scriptures do not dwell largely on the lives of women, but a study of what is said will oftentimes reveal deeper meaning in the record and put force into a solitary word. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews couples Sarah with Abraham in the list of heroes and heroines of faith, and St. Peter from a single word finds a text to extol the submission which she showed to her husband. He probably refers to Gen. xviii. 12, where she gives the title of "lord" to Abraham, as Rachel in another place (Gen. xxxi. 35) does to her father Laban: *For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.* A Scripture example which has more in common with the experience of the Asian women is the life of Hannah. Her lot, for a time at least, was as full of grief and disappointment as theirs could be; but her trust in God was unshaken. Her patience under provocation was exemplary, while the picture of her home life is one

full of touching affection on the part of both husband and wife; and the mother's gratitude, when her prayer was granted, is set forth in her noble hymn of thanksgiving and in the devotion of her child to the service of the God who had bestowed him. Ruth is another of those holy women who must have been in St. Peter's thoughts, who, though not of the house of Israel, manifested virtues in her life which made her fit to be the ancestress of King David. The Apostle, however, seems to have had a purpose in his special mention of Sarah. As the sons of Israel looked back to Abraham and to the covenant sealed with him, yea, not seldom prided themselves on being his children, so the daughters of Israel counted themselves as Sarah's daughters after the flesh. St. Peter now gives them another ground for that claim. God's promises to Abraham have been fulfilled in Christ, and so Christian Jewesses are more truly than ever daughters of Sarah. *Whose children ye now are.* But to the heathen converts the same door was opened. They by their faith were now made partakers of the ancient covenant. They too were become Sarah's daughters. Let them, one and all, continue in the well-doing which has been commended; let it be seen in the daily round (*ἀναστροφὴ*) of their lives, led in quietness and humility. The excessive love of adornment against which they are warned marks a condition of boldness and unrest. But unrest may enter into the other actions of their life. Their behaviour is to be coupled with fear and reverence, but it should eschew everything which partakes of flighty irregularity. It should be steady and consistent, running into no extremes either of humiliation or the contrary. *Do well, and be not put in fear by any terror.*

The Apostle now addresses Christian husbands. In his counsel to subjects and slaves he has not dwelt on the duties of rulers and masters. Perhaps he judged it unlikely that his letter would come to the hands of many such, or it may be he thought the lessons which he had to give were more needed by the subject people, if Christ's cause were to be furthered. But with husbands and wives life has of necessity a great deal in common, and the one partner can hardly receive counsel which is not of interest to the other. To the wives the Apostle spake as though examples of unbelieving husbands might be rare. Christian husbands with unbelieving wives he hardly seems to contemplate. We know from St. Paul (1 Cor. vii. 16) that there were such. But doubtless heathen wives hearkened to Christian husbands more readily than heathen husbands to their Christian wives. The husbands are to use their position as heads of their wives with judgement and discretion: *Dwell with your wives according to knowledge.* The knowledge of which St. Peter speaks is not religious, godly, Christian knowledge, but that foresight and thoughtfulness which the responsibility of the husband calls for. He will understand what things for his wife's sake he should do or leave undone. This knowledge, which results in considerate conduct towards her, will manifest itself in Christian chivalry. The woman is physically the feebler of the two. No burden beyond her powers will be laid upon her; and by reason of her weaker nature regard and honour will be felt to be her due. For the woman is the glory of the man (1 Cor. xi. 7). Such observance will not degenerate into undue adulation nor foolish fondness, apt to foster pride and conceit, but will be inspired by the sense that in God's creation

neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man.

But beyond and above these daily graces of domestic and social intercourse, the Apostle would have husband and wife knit together by a higher bond. They are *joint heirs of the grace of life.* Both are meant to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance, and such participation makes their chief duty here to be preparation for the life to come. Those who are bound together not by wedlock only, but by the hope of a common salvation, will find a motive in that thought to help each other in life's pilgrimage, each to shun all that might cause the other to stumble: *That your prayers be not hindered.* They are fellow-travellers with the same needs. Together they can bring their requests before God, and where the two join in heart and soul Christ has promised to be present as the Third. And in praying they will know one another's necessities. This is the grandest knowledge the husband can attain to for the honouring of his wife; and using it, he will speed their united supplications to the throne of grace, and the union of hearts will not fail of its blessing.

X

THEY WHO BLESS ARE BLESSED

X

THEY WHO BLESS ARE BLESSED

"Finally, *be* ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: and let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? But and if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed *are ye*: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: *being* ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ."—1 PETER iii. 8-16.

THE Apostle now ceases from his special admonitions, and enforces generally such qualities and conduct as must mark all who fear the Lord. *Finally*, he says—and the word may indicate the close of his counsels; but the virtues which he inculcates are of so important a character that he may very well intend them as the apex and crown of all his previous advice—*be ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded.* St. Peter has here grouped together a number of epithets of which all

but one are only used in the New Testament by himself, and they are of that graphic character which is so conspicuous in all the Apostle's language. *Like-minded.* If the word be not there, the spirit is largely exemplified in the early history of the Church. How often we hear the phrase "with one accord" in the opening chapters of the Acts. Thus the disciples continued in prayer (i. 14); thus they went daily to the Temple (ii. 46); thus they lifted up their voices to God (iv. 24), for all they that believed were of one heart and one soul (iv. 32). Such lives exhibit harmony of thought, the same aim and purpose. The men may not, will not, always use the same means or follow the same methods, but they will all be seeking one result. Such unity is worth more than uniformity. *Compassionate.* This feeling St. Paul describes (Rom. xii. 15) as rejoicing with them that do rejoice and weeping with them that weep. For the παθήματα of this life are not always sorrowful, though the best of them are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed (Rom. viii. 18). *Loving as brethren.* The sense of the brotherhood of Christians is strongly marked in all the New Testament Scriptures. It is the name by which our Lord claims fellowship with men, being not ashamed to call them brethren. It is the designation of the Christian body from the first (Matt. xxiii. 8), is constantly found in the Acts and the Epistles (Acts vi. 3, ix. 30, xi. 29), and has been used of the Church in every age, marking how as one family we dwell in Him. Next comes the word which is not St. Peter's alone: *Tender-hearted.* St. Paul has it (Eph. iv. 32), but it is no Greek notion. It was a Jewish idea that deep feeling was closely connected with some of the organs of the body; and in the Old Testament,

as in the story of Joseph (Gen. xliii. 30) and elsewhere (1 Kings iii. 26), we come upon such phrases as "His bowels did yearn upon his brother." This Hebrew notion the LXX. has conveyed into Greek by the word which St. Peter here uses, and which those translators had used and consecrated long before. For them so exalted was the thought contained in it that they employ it in the prayer of Manasses (ver. 7) to express the tenderness of God towards the penitent, the yearning love of the Father, who sees the prodigal afar off, and has compassion. *Humble-minded.* This word and those akin to it are almost a New Testament creation. The heathen had no admiration for the temper it expresses, and where they do use the word it is in a bad sense as signifying "cowardly" and "mean-spirited." Before Christ none had taught, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. xxiii. 11).

It is manifest that if such harmony, kind feeling, attachment, affection, and humility flourished among believers, these virtues would put discord to the rout, and leave no occasion for rending the oneness of the Christian body. They would also be proof against evil from without, both in deed and speech, neither tempted to *render evil for evil* in their actions nor *reviling for reviling* in their words. They have a duty to the world, and cannot thus belie their Christian profession. They are called to adorn the doctrine of their Saviour, and the Master's sermon has among its prominent precepts "Bless them that curse you." This is the spirit of St. Peter's exhortation, *But contrariwise blessing*; that is, Be ye of those who bless. For there is a law of recompense with God in good things as in evil; the blessers shall be blessed: *For hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

It is as though he urged them thus: Ye were aforetime enemies of God; but ye have been made partakers of His heavenly calling (Heb. iii. 1), that ye may come to blessing. This should move you to bless your enemies. And more than this, the servant of God may receive no blessing from the world, may get curses for his blessing; but yet he knows where to flee for consolation. He can pray with the Psalmist, "Let them curse, but bless Thou" (Psalm cix. 28), conscious that the Lord will stand at the right hand of the needy.

The psalmists knew much of such trials, and it is from the words of one of them (Psalm xxxiv. 12-16) that St. Peter enforces his own lesson. It is a psalm full of the knowledge of the trials of God's servants: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous"; but it is rich also in plenitude of comfort: "The Lord delivereth him out of them all." The father of long ago teaches thus to his children the fear of the Lord: *He that would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: and let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.* A glance at the Psalm will show that the Apostle has not quoted precisely; and though he has much in common with the Greek of the LXX., he does not adhere closely to that. But he gives to the full the spirit both of the Hebrew and the Greek. The life of which the Psalmist speaks is life in this world. The original explains this by making the latter clause of the verse, "and loveth *many* days, that he may see good." And the love is to be a noble feeling,

a desire to make life worth living. Such a life must exhibit watchfulness over words and actions. The precepts begin at the beginning, with control of the tongue. Control that, and you are master of the rest. "It is a little member, but boasteth great things." "The world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body" (James iii. 5, 6). It needs to be kept as with a bridle, and not only when the ungodly are in sight, but constantly. But the words of the Psalm contemplate a further danger. Men may give good words with the lips while the heart is full of bitterness. Then the lips are lying, and this is an evil as great as the former, and more perilous to him who commits it, because the sin does not come to the light that it may be reproved, but contrives to wear the mask of virtue.

And the actions need watchfulness also. They must not only possess the negative quality of abstinence from evil, but the positive stamp of good deeds done. "By their fruits ye shall know them." And the work will be no light one. Peace is to be sought, and the Apostle uses a word which implies that a chase is needful to obtain it. St. Paul has a passage very much in the spirit of St. Peter's teaching here, and the words of which picture distinctly the difficulties which the Christian will have to labour against: "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 3). This tells us why our Apostle urges the pursuit of peace. It is the clasp which binds the Christian communion together. From all sorts of causes men are prone to fall apart, to break the oneness; and peace is able to hold them fast. Hence the diligence in seeking it, the earnestness of the pursuit that it may not elude us.

But when all is done, when men have not been sitting with folded hands waiting and dreaming that peace would come without pursuit, but have laboured for it, they do not always attain to it. "I am for peace," says the Psalmist, "but when I speak, they are for war" (Psalm cxx. 7). And so the disappointed struggler is directed to the sure source of consolation amid discomfiture. The Lord marks his efforts, knows their earnest purpose in spite of their ill-success. He beholds also those who have withstood them, but with far other regard. St. Peter has not quoted what the Psalmist says of their fate: "God will root out the remembrance of them from the earth." God's righteous pilgrim is not forgotten. His prayer is heard, and will be answered for good. No shadow has come between him and God, though his lot seem very dark. Neither can the wrong-doer raise a shadow to screen himself from the all-seeing eyes. All things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Thus far St. Peter has used the language of the Psalmist, and among the converts the Jews would be sure to supply from the context those other words, "O fear the Lord, all ye His saints; for they that fear Him lack nothing." The Apostle clothes that same thought in his own words: *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?* He has repeatedly dwelt on the power of goodness to win unbelievers to its side (ii. 12, 15; iii. 1), and the same idea shapes his words now. In those days the Zealots were well known, and their unbounded enthusiasm for their evil cause. Josephus lays the destruction of Jerusalem at their door. The Apostle would have Christ's disciples "zealots" for Him. Let there be nothing half-hearted in their service, and its power

will be irresistible. It will avail either to silence and confound the adversaries, or to strengthen the faithful so that the smell of the furnace of persecution shall not pass upon them. They shall be enabled to break the chains with which their foes would bind them as easily as Samson his green withes. *But and if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye.* If ye endure chastening, God is dealing with you as with sons. He has called Himself your Father; Christ has claimed you for brethren. He, the righteous, suffered; shall we not reckon it for a blessing to be worthy to bear the cross? Only let us be of good courage. He that endureth to the end shall find salvation. *And fear not their fear, neither be troubled.* Again St. Peter applies the promises of the ancient Scriptures. In the days of Isaiah all Judah was in terror, king and people alike, before the gathering armies of Syria and Israel. In their dread comes the prophetic message, and says to the confederates, "Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces," and to the tiny power of Judah, "Let the Lord of hosts be your fear, and let Him be your dread, and He shall be for a sanctuary" (Isa. viii. 12, 13). The condition of these Asian converts was one of heaviness through manifold temptations. While the believer lives here he always has his assailants, and in those early days the rulers of the earth were not seldom among the adversaries of the Christians. Hence the Apostle's exhortation is most apposite: Fear not their fear—the things which they would dread, and with which they will threaten you. For what are they? They may take away your property. Be not troubled; you would soon have had to leave it. The loss a few years sooner is no terrible affliction. They may drive you from one land to another. To

strangers and sojourners what can that signify? If they cast you into prison, the Lord who shut the lions' mouths for Daniel is your Lord also; and I, Peter, know how angel-hands have removed chains and opened prison doors. And should they scourge and torture you, do you shrink from thus being made like unto your Master? *Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.*

Isaiah's message to disheartened Judah was, "The Lord of hosts, Him shall ye sanctify." On His word shall ye rely, assured that He, the holy God, will fail neither in wisdom nor power. To think otherwise is not to sanctify Him. The Lord knoweth how to deliver out of temptation. St. Peter, who knew Christ as the Son of the living God, applies to the Son the words first spoken of the Father. The Son is one with the Father. Hence he bids the afflicted converts, suffering for righteousness' sake, not to be afraid of the world's terror, but to sanctify Christ in their hearts as Lord. He is the Emmanuel, whom Isaiah was sent to promise. God has dwelt among men, and will be the God and the Deliverer of all His faithful ones. This sense of "God with us" they know, and with the knowledge comes a power not their own, and they fear no more the fear of their adversaries.

It is against foes of another sort that the Christian has now to hold fast his faith, and sanctify Christ as his Lord. There are those who deny Him all that is supernatural, all that speaks of the Divine in His history; who treat the resurrection and ascension of the Lord as groundless legends, due to the ignorance of His followers; and who leave to the Jesus of the Gospels only the qualities of a better fellow-man These are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

And of such dangerous teaching it would seem as if St. Peter had been thinking in the words that follow: *Being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you.* The believer rests on Christ in faith. But though in his belief there must be much which he cannot fathom, yet it is a belief for men. His service is a reasonable service; he can point to abundance of evidence as ground for his faith; he believes because he has experienced the power of the Spirit, and fears not to trust the Christ whom he has sanctified in his heart as Lord; he knows in whom he has believed. But beside this, he can study the Old Testament; and there he learns how the coming incarnation dominates every portion of the volume, how from the first redemption through the seed of the woman was made known; and he follows the revelation step by step till in the evangel of Isaiah he has predictions almost as vivid and plain as the narrative of the Gospels. Those four narratives are another warrant for his faith, their wondrous agreement amid multitudinous divergences, divergences so marked that none could have ventured to put them forth as history except while the knowledge of those who had seen the Lord and been witnesses of His actions was available to vouch for and stamp as true these varicoloured pictures of the life of Jesus. He has further vouchers in the lives and letters of those who knew and followed the Lord, followed Him, most of them, on the road that led through persecution unto death. And beside all this, there stands and grows the Church built upon this history, strong with the power of this faith and in her holy worship sanctifying Christ as her Lord. These are things to which the Christian appeals.

They are not the only reasons for belief, but they are those of which he can make other men cognisant, and to which the world cannot continue always blind; and they have a force against which the gates of hell have not yet been, nor ever will be able, to prevail.

These reasons he gives *with meekness and fear*—with meekness, because in that spirit all the victories of the Lord are to be won; with fear, lest by feeble advocacy the cause of Christ may suffer. And he does not bring words alone with him to the struggle, but the power of a godly life; he is prepared for the conflict by the possession of a *good conscience* before God and men; he bears in mind the prophetic exhortation, "Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. lii. 11). That injunction was given to those who were in their day strangers and pilgrims. But with the good conscience, pureness of heart in the service of the Lord, there need be no haste, no flight. The Lord will go before them; the God of Israel will be their rearward. And the good conscience has lost none of its efficacy: *Wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ.* Of the Christian's faith and hope his revilers know nothing, but his good life and his reasons for it men can see and hear. And these shall gain the victory. But they must go hand in hand. The deeds must bear out the words. When he testifies that his hope is placed where neither persecutions nor revilings avail against it, his life must show him fearless of what the world can do. His position toward it must be that which St. Peter himself took: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts iv. 19). Men may marvel at what they see in him, but they will take

knowledge that he has been with Jesus. He is created, new-created, in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. ii. 10). His revilers use him despitefully; but, according to Christ's lesson, he prays for them, and their shafts glance pointless off. Well does St. Paul close his catalogue of the Christian armour "with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 18). Thus does the believer wield his weapons effectually. His revilers have no reason for their words; he is careful that they shall have none. As with Peter and John the council could say nothing against their good deed and let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, so shall it be with others of the faithful; and, for very shame at the futility of their accusations and assaults, the revilers shall be put to silence.

XI

THE REWARDS OF SUFFERING FOR WELL-DOING

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"For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is on the right hand of God, having gone unto heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him."—1 PETER iii. 17–22.

THE Apostle comes back to his solemn subject. Why are the righteous called to suffering? The question was perplexing these Asian Christians when St. Peter wrote. Previous ages had pondered over it, Job and his friends among the number; and men ponder over it still. St. Peter has suggested several answers: The faith of Christ's servants after trial will be found praiseworthy at the appearance of their Lord; to bear wrong with patience is acceptable with God; it is a happy lot, Christ has said, to suffer in the cause of righteousness. His next response to the question is more solemn than these: Suffering is sent to the righteous by the will of God. It never

comes otherwise, and is meant to serve two several purposes: it is intended to benefit the unrighteous, and to be a blessing and glory to the righteous who endure it.

He shows that this is God's will by two examples. Christ, the sinless, suffered at the hands of sinful men, and for their sakes, as well as for all sinners; and though we only can approach the subject with deep reverence and use the language of Scripture rather than our own about the effect of suffering on Christ Himself, we are taught therein that He was made perfect as the Leader of salvation by the things which He suffered: and the Apostle here describes the sequel of those sufferings by the session on the right hand of God in heaven, where angels and authorities and powers are made subject unto Him.

But God's ordinance in respect of the suffering of the godly has been the same from of old. In the ancient world Noah had found grace in God's sight in the midst of a graceless world. He was made a witness and a preacher of righteousness; and the faithful building of the ark at God's command was a constant testimony to the wrong-doers, whose sole response was mockery and a continuance in the corruption of their way. But God had not left them without witness; and when the Deluge came at length, some hearts may have gone forth to God in penitence, though too late to be saved from the destruction. To Noah and those with him safety was assured; and when the door of the ark was opened, and the small band of the rescued came forth, it was to have the welcome of God's blessing and to be pointed to a token of His everlasting covenant. In this wise St. Peter adds once more to the consolations of those who

endure grief and suffering wrongfully, and thus does he set forth the general drift of his argument. But the whole passage is so replete with helpful lessons that it merits the fullest consideration.

For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. For evil-doing suffering is certain to come. It cannot be escaped. God has linked the two together by an unalterable law. Such suffering is penal. But when the righteous are afflicted their lot is not of law, but of God's merciful appointment and selection, and is ordained with a purpose of blessing both to themselves and others. The words of St. Peter are very emphatic concerning God's ordinance: *If the will of God so will.* It is not always clear to men. Therefore St. Paul (Eph. i. 9) speaks of the mystery of the Divine will, but in the same place (i. 5) of the good pleasure thereof. It is exercised with love, and not with anger. It was the feeling[1] with which God looked forth upon the new-created world, and, behold, it was very good (Rev. iv. 11). With the same feeling He longs to behold it rescued and restored. Such is the desire, such the aim, with which God permits trial and distress to fall upon the righteous. And that the sufferers may be kept in mind of God's remedial purpose herein, the Apostle adduces the example of Christ Himself: *Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.* The suffering Christ should give pause to all questionings about the sufferings of His servants. Their lot may be hard to explain. But be their lives

[1] The LXX. translators use the word θέλω very frequently to translate such expressions as "to delight in," "to have pleasure in." Cf. Deut. xxi. 14; 1 Sam. xviii. 22; 1 Kings x. 9.

ever so pure, their purposes ever so lofty, "in many things we offend all," and need not murmur if we be chastened. But as we think of the sinless Jesus and His unequalled sufferings, we learn the applicability of the prophet's lamentation, "See if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" (Lam. i. 12). The burden of the unrighteous world was laid upon the righteous Son of God, and this because of God's love for sinners. Herein was the love of God manifested in us. Sinful men were the material chosen for the display of the Divine love, and God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. It was of God's ordinance and the Son's obedience that redemption was thus purchased. That we might live, the sinless Christ must die, and ere He died must be put to grief by the opposition of those whom He came to save; must lament and be hindered in His works of mercy by the want of faith among His own kindred, by the persistent sins of those cities in which His mightiest works were wrought; must shed tears of anguish over the city of David, which would know nothing of the things which belonged unto her peace. This was the chastisement of the innocent to gain peace for the guilty, that God might thus commend His love to men, and Christ might bring them back to the Father. And this bringing back is not the mere action of a guide. This He is, but He is far more: He helps those who are coming at every step, and as they draw near they find through Him that the Father's house and the Father's welcome are waiting for their return. Shall men complain, nay shall they not be lost in praise, if God will at all consent to use their trials to extend His kingdom and His glory, and thus make them partakers of the sufferings of Christ?

Such a lot had been welcome to St. Peter: "They departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name" (Acts v. 41); and here in his epistle he publishes the joy of such shame, publishes it that others through all ages may suffer gladly, trusting their God to use the pains He sends to magnify His glory. The lesson is for all men at all times. Christ suffered for sins once; but once here means once for all, and proclaims to each generation of sinners that Jesus bore His cross for them.

Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit. The suffering of Jesus went thus far, that there might be nothing in the cup of human woe which He had not tasted. His spirit was parted from the flesh, as when we die. The body lay in the grave; the spirit passed to the world of the departed. But the triumph of death was short. After the three days' burial came the miracle of miracles. The dead Jesus returned to life, and that resurrection is made the earnest of a future life to all believers. Thus began the recompense of the righteous Sufferer, and the power of the resurrection makes suffering endurable to the godly, makes them rejoice to be conformed unto Christ's death and forgetful of all things save the prize of the high calling, which lies before them to be won. Nor was it with Christ's spirit during those three days as with the souls of other departed ones. He, the sinless One, had no judgement to await; His stay there was that dwelling in paradise which He foreknew and spake of to the penitent thief.

In which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah. At this

point we come upon a twofold line of interpretation, occasioned by the difficulty which constantly arises of deciding whether πνεῦμα—"spirit"—is to be understood of the Divine Spirit or of the spiritual part of man's nature as distinguished from the flesh. Those who have taken the words "quickened in the Spirit" of the previous verse in the former of these senses explain this passage of the preaching of Christ to the antediluvian world through His servant Noah. The Divine fiat had gone forth. The Flood was to come and bring destruction to the bodies of all but Noah and his family. But within those doomed bodies souls were shut up, and these the love of Christ would not willingly give over. They should hear, while still in their prison of the flesh, the offer of His grace; and should they repent, the waves which wrought destruction of the body might release them from the bondage of corruption. This was the purpose of God's long-suffering, which waited and appealed while the ark was a-preparing. Thus did the Divine Spirit of Christ go forth as a herald of mercy to the impenitent, proclaiming that for their souls the door of forgiveness was not yet closed.

Those, on the contrary, who refer "quickened in the spirit" to the human soul of Christ, take this text as an additional authority for the doctrine in the Apostles' Creed that our Lord's human soul after the Crucifixion descended into hell. Thus, they hold, His pure spirit went beyond this world to experience all that human spirits can know before the judgement comes. Thither He came but as a Herald. Death and the grave had no power to detain Him. In mercy to those who had passed away before the Incarnation, He brought the message of the mediatorial work which He had completed in His crucifixion. The sinners before the Flood

are singled out for mention by St. Peter as sinners above all men, so sunk in wickedness that but eight were found worthy to be saved from the Deluge. Thus the magnitude of Christ's mercy is glorified. He who goes to seek these must long to save all men. And to carry this message of glad tidings is part of the recompense for the agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary, a portion of what made it a blessing to suffer for well-doing.

Up to the sixteenth century the latter exposition and application of the words found most favour, but at the time of the Reformation the chief authorities[1] expounded them of the preaching of Christ's Spirit through the ministry of the patriarch. For the main argument with which St. Peter is dealing these applications, however interesting in themselves, are not deeply important. He wants to set before the converts a warrant for what he has said about the blessedness of suffering for righteousness. If we accept the application to Noah, the example is a powerful one. His sufferings must have been manifold. The long time between the threatened judgement and its accomplishment was filled with the opposition of sinners and their mockery and taunts over his patient labour on the ark, to say nothing of the distress of soul when he found his preaching falling ever on deat ears. But his trial had its reward at last when the little band were shut in by God Himself, and the ark bore them safely on

[1] It marks the time of this change of opinion that in the first form of the English Articles (the forty-two of 1553) the text 1 Peter iii. 19 was given as evidence for the descent into hell in Article III., but in the later form (the thirty-nine of 1563) the allusion to St. Peter's words was omitted. No doubt the divines of that time wished to do away with all that might be used to countenance the doctrine of purgatory.

the rising waters. And if he could feel that any, though perishing in body, had by repentance been saved in soul, this would make light the burden even of greater suffering than had fallen to the patriarch, to know the joy which comes from converting a sinner from the error of his way and therein saving a soul from death.

And if we refer the words "quickened in the spirit" to the soul of Christ, parted from the body and present in the spirit-world, they are a link to connect this passage with words of the Apostle's sermon on the day of Pentecost. There he does speak of the Lord's descent into hell, and teaches how David of old spake thereof and of the Resurrection "that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption" (Acts ii. 31). In this sense the quickening in the spirit is the beginning of Christ's victory and triumph. It is the earnest of eternal life to all believers. And how welcome a message to those who, like Abraham, had rejoiced in faith to see the day of Christ, to hear from His own lips the tidings of the victory won! Of the Herald of such a Gospel message, of Him who by His suffering delivered those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, we may, with all reverence, speak as "being made perfect by becoming the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him" (Heb. v. 9).

Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved. The building of the ark was the test of Noah's faith, the ark itself the means of his preservation. In the patriarch's sufferings St. Peter has found an apt parallel to the life of these Asian Christians: the same godless surroundings; the same opposition and mockery; the same need for steadfast faith. But if rightly

pondered, the Old Testament lesson is rich in teaching. Noah becomes a preacher of righteousness, not for his own generation only, but for all time. He suffered in his well-doing. Nothing stings more keenly than scorn and contempt. These he experienced to the full. He came as God's herald to men who had put God out of all their thoughts. His message was full of terror: "Behold, I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die" (Gen. vi. 17). Few heeded; fewer still believed. But when the work of the messenger was over; when the ark was prepared, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; when he and his were shut in by God, then appeared the blessedness. And if haply there had been any in whom he had beheld signs of repentance, how the thought that some souls were saved, though their bodies were drowned with the rest, would magnify the rejoicing of the rescued; and the overthrow of the ungodly would proclaim how little ultimate bliss there could be in evil-doing. All these things would come home to the hearts of the "strangers of the dispersion."

And were they few in number? Fewer still were those who stood with Noah in the world's corruption. But God was with him; he walked with God, and found grace in His eyes; and God blessed him when the Flood was gone, and by the sign of the covenant, the faithful witness in heaven (Psalm lxxxix. 37), has placed a memorial of the happiness of his well-doing before the eyes of mankind for ever. And it would comfort the believers if they kept in mind the object which St. Peter has so often set before them, and on

which he would have them set their desire in their distress. There was hope, nay assurance, that the heathen world around them would be won by their steadfast well-doing to the service of the Lord. Christ did not send His followers on a hopeless quest when He said, "Go, baptize all nations." It was no material ark they were set to fashion; they were exalted to be builders of the Church of Christ. And to put one stone upon another in that building was a joy worth earning by a life of sacrifice.

Saved through water. But God appointed the same waves to be the destruction of the disobedient. With no faith-built ark in which to ride safe, the sinners perished in the mighty waters which to Noah were the pathway of deliverance. A solemn thought this for those who have the offer of the antitype which the [illegible] to mention! This double use which God makes of His creatures—how to some they bring punishment, to others preservation—is the theme of several noble chapters in the book of Wisdom (xi.-xvi.), expanding the lesson taught by the pillar of a cloud, which was light to Israel, while it was thick darkness to the Egyptians.

Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism. Under the new covenant also water has been chosen by Christ to be the symbol of His grace. His servants are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is the door appointed for entrance into the family. But the waters of the Flood would have overwhelmed Noah, even as the rest, had he not been within the ark, and the ark would not have been made had he been lacking in faith. So in baptism must no more saving office be ascribed to the water. Even the Divine word, "the word of

hearing, did not profit some, because they were not united by faith with them that heard aright" (Heb. iv. 2). Neither does the sign in baptism, though Divinely instituted, profit, being alone. The Christian, having been cleansed by the washing of water with the word, is sanctified by Christ because of his faith. The washing of regeneration must be joined with the renewing of the Holy Ghost. That Spirit does not renew, but convicts of sin those who believe not on Christ (John xvi. 8). In his salvation Noah accepted and acted on God's warning about things not seen as yet, and so his baptism became effectual. In faith, too, Israel marched through the Red Sea, and beheld the overthrow of their heathen pursuers. And baptism mixed with faith is saving now. Those Old Testament deliverances were figures only of the true, and were but for temporal rescue. Christ's ordinance is that to which they testified before His coming, and is coupled with the promise of His presence even unto the end of the world.

And that there may be no place for doubting, the Apostle subjoins a twofold explanation. First he tells us what baptism is not, then what it is and what it bestows. It is *not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.* Were this all, it would avail no more than the cardinal ordinances (with meats and drinks and divers washings) which were imposed of old until a time of reformation. Through them the way into the holy place was not made manifest, nor could be. True baptism is *the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* This is a spiritual purification, wrought through the might of Christ's resurrection. And the Apostle describes it by the effect which it produces in the

religious condition and attitude of him who has experienced it. The sinner who loves his sin dare not question his conscience. That witness would pronounce for his condemnation. So he finds it best to lull it to sleep, or perhaps deaden it altogether. But to him who, being risen with Christ in faith, seeks those things that are above, who strives to make himself spiritually purer day by day, there is no such dread. Rather by constant questioning and self-examination he labours that his conscience may be void of offence towards God and man. That man not only dares, but knows it to be a most solemn duty, thus to purge his conscience. So the effect of baptism is daily felt, and the questioned soul thankfully bears witness to the active presence of the Spirit, for the bestowal of which the Sacrament was the primal pledge.

Others have rendered ἐπερώτημα "an appeal," and have joined it very closely with the words *toward God*. These have found in the Apostle's explanation the recognition of that power to draw nigh unto God which the purified conscience both feels, and feels the need of. There are daily stumblings, the constant want of help; and through Christ's resurrection the way is opened, a new and living way, into the holiest, and the power is granted of appealing unto God, while the sense of baptismal grace already bestowed gives confidence and certainty that our petitions will be granted.

Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him. Now the Apostle turns back to his main subject. The righteous who suffers for, and in, his righteousness, may not only be a blessing to others, but may himself find blessing. We dare only use the

words which the Spirit has supplied when we speak of Christ being perfected by what He endured. But the Apostle to the Hebrews has a clear teaching. He speaks of Christ as being "the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of His person" (Heb. i. 3). Yet he tells that, "though He was a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and became thus the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. v. 8). And he goes further, and teaches that this submission of Christ to suffering was in harmony with the Divine character and according to God's own purpose: "It became Him for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10). From all eternity Christ was perfect as the Son of God, but He has suffered that He may be a perfect Mediator. Why this was well-pleasing unto the Father it is not ours to know, nor can we by searching find. But, the sufferings ended, He is crowned with glory; He is exalted to the right hand of the Father; He is made Lord of all. This He taught His disciples ere He sent them to baptize: "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). Having taken hold of the seed of Abraham and consented to be made lower than the angels, He has now been set "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. i. 21). Thus does St. Paul teach even as St. Peter; and we may believe, though we fail to grasp the manner thereof, that through His humiliation our blessed Lord has been exalted, not only because He receives for ever the praises of the redeemed, but because He has wrought

through His suffering that which was well-pleasing in the sight of the Father.

The whole clause before us is worthy of notice for another reason. It was doubtless written before our Gospels were in circulation, when the life and work of Jesus were only published by the oral teaching of the Apostles and their fellows; yet in a summary form it covers the whole field of the Gospel story. Those to whom this Epistle was written had been taught that Jesus was the Christ, had heard of His righteous life among men, of His sufferings, death, and resurrection, had been taught that afterwards He was taken up into heaven. They knew also that the baptism by which they had been admitted into the Christian communion was His ordinance and the appointed door into the Church which He lived and died to build up among men. Thus, without the Gospels, we have the Gospel in the Epistles, and a witness to the integrity of that history of Christ's life which has come down to us in the narratives of the Evangelists. And when all the contributions of the Apostolic Epistles are put side by side, we may easily gather from them that the history of Jesus which we have now is that which the Church has possessed from the beginning of the Gospel.

XII

THE LESSONS OF SUFFERING

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"Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm **ye yourselves** also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*: who shall give account to HIM that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."—1 PETER iv. 1–6.

IT is always hard to swim against the stream; and if the effort be a moral one, the difficulty is not lessened. These early Christians were finding it so. For them there must have existed hardships of which to-day we can have no experience, and form but an imperfect estimate. If they lived among a Jewish population, these were sure to be offended at the new faith. And when we remember the zeal for persecution of a Saul of Tarsus, we can see that in many cases the better the Jew, the more would he feel himself bound, if possible, to exterminate the new doctrines. Among the heathen the lot of the Christians was often worse. Did the people listen a while to the teaching of the missionaries, yet so unstable were they that, as

at Lystra, to-day might see them stoning those whom yesterday they were venerating as gods; and they could easily, by reason of their greater numbers, bring the magistrates to inflict penalties even where the multitude refrained from mob violence. The cry, "These men exceedingly trouble our city" or "These who turn the world upside down are come among us," was sure to find a ready audience; while the uproar and violence which raged in a city like Ephesus, when Paul and his companions preached there, shows how many temporal interests could be banded together against the Christian cause. On individual believers, not of the number of the preachers, the more violent attacks might not fall; but to suffer in the flesh was the lot of most of them in St. Peter's day. Hence the strong figure he employs to describe the preparation they will need: *Arm ye yourselves*—make you ready, for you are going forth to battle. St. Paul also, writing to Rome and Corinth, uses the same figure: "Let us put on the armour of light," "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."

Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind. Though some strokes of the foe will fall on the flesh, the conflict is really a spiritual one. The suffering in the body is to be sustained and surmounted by an inward power; the armour of light and of righteousness is the equipment of the soul, which panoply the Apostle here calls the mind of Christ. Now what is the mind of Christ which can avail His struggling servants? The word implies intention, purpose, resolution, that on which the heart is set. Now the intention of Christ's life was to oppose and overcome all that was evil, and to consecrate Himself to all good for the love of His people.

This latter He tells us in His parting prayer for His disciples: "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (John xvii. 19), while every action of His life proclaims His determined enmity against sin. This brought Him obloquy while He lived in the world, and in the end a shameful death; but these things did not abate His hatred of sin, nor lessen His love for sinners. For still into the city where He reigns there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth (Rev. xxi. 27), though to the faithful penitent "the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

Christ bare willingly all that was laid upon Him that He might bring men unto God. This is the spirit, this the purpose, the intent, with which His followers are to be actuated: to have the same strenuous abhorrence of sin, the same devotion in themselves to goodness, which shall make them inflexible, however fiercely they may be assailed. Let them only make the resolve, and power shall be bestowed to strengthen them. He who says, "Arm yourselves," supplies the weapons when His servants need them. Jesus Himself found them ready when the tempter came, and drew them in all their keenness and strength from the Divine armoury. Satan comes to others as he came to Christ, and will make them flinch and waver, if he can. At times he offers attractive baits; at times he brings fear to his aid. But, in whatever shape he comes or sends his agents, let them but cling to the mind of Christ, and they shall, like Him, say triumphantly, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. God intends it to be so, and the earnest Christian

strives with all his might that it may be so. To help men God sends them sufferings, and intends them to have a moral effect on the life. They are not penal; they are the discipline of perfect love desiring that men should be held back from straying. Men cannot always see the purposes of God at first, and are prone to bewail their lot. But here and there a saint of old has left his testimony. One of the later psalmists had discovered the blessedness of God-sent trials: "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I observe Thy word"; and, in thankful acknowledgment of the love which sent the blows, he adds, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes" (Psalm cxix. 67, 71). Hezekiah had learnt the lesson, though it brought him close to the gates of the grave; but he testifies, "Behold, it was for my peace that I had great bitterness. . . . Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back" (Isa. xxxviii. 17). God had blotted out the evil record, that he who had suffered in the flesh might cease from sin. It is good for us thus to recognise that God's dispensations are for our correction and teaching, and that without them we should have been verily desolate, left to choose our own way, which would surely have been evil; and though we cannot cease from sin while we are in the flesh, God's mercy places the ideal state before us—*He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin*—that we may be strengthened, nevermore to submit ourselves to the yoke of wickedness. How shall he that is dead to sin live any longer therein? Live therein he cannot. Of that old man within him he will have no resurrection, for though the motions, the promptings to evil, are there, the love of evil is slain by the greater love of Christ.

That ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. Christians must live out their lives till God calls them, and for the rest of their time in the flesh they will be among their wonted surroundings. Just as Christian slaves must abide with their masters, and Christian wives continue with their husbands, so each several believer must do his duty where God has placed him. But because he is a believer it will be done in a different spirit. He is daily cutting himself away from what the world counts for life; he has begun to live in the Spirit, and the natural man is weakened day by day; he knows that what is born of the flesh is flesh, and bears the taint of sin: so he refuses to follow where it would lead him. Men often plead for evil habits that they are natural, forgetting that "natural" thus used means human, corrupt nature. The birth of the Spirit transforms this nature, and the renewed man goes about his worldly life with a new motive, new purposes. He must follow his lawful calling like other folks, but the sense of his pilgrimage makes him to differ; he is longing to depart, and holds himself in constant readiness. Worldly men live as though they were rooted here and would never be moved. "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names" (Psalm xlix. 11). To the servant of Christ life wears another aspect. He is content to live on, for God so wills it, and has work for him to do. To continue in the flesh may be, as it was to St. Paul, the fruit of his labour. And he welcomes this owning of his work, and will spend his powers in like service. Yet, with the Apostle, he has ever "the desire to

depart and be with Christ, for it is very far better" (Phil. i. 23).

And as he strives to fulfil God's intent by crucifying the old man and ceasing from sin, the Christian rejoices in a growing sense of freedom. To follow the lusts of men was to serve many and hard taskmasters. Riches, fame, luxury, sensual indulgences, riotous living, are all keen to win new slaves, and paint their lures in the most attractive colours; and one appetite will make itself the ally of another, lust hard by greed, so that the chains of him who takes service with them are riveted many times over, and difficult, often impossible, to be cast off. But the will of God is one: "One is your Master"; "Love the Lord your God with all your heart"; "And all ye are brethren"; "Love your neighbour as yourself." Then shall you enter into life. And the life of this promise is not that fragment of time which remains to men in the flesh, but that unending after-life where the natural body shall be exchanged for a spiritual body, and death be swallowed up in victory.

For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles. The Apostle here seems to be addressing the Jews who, living among the Gentiles, had, like their forefathers in Canaan, learned their works. The nation was not so prone to fall away into heathendom after the Captivity; yet some of them in the dispersion, like Samson when he went down unto the Philistines, may have been captured and blinded and made to serve. The proximity of evil is infectious. To the Gentile converts St. Peter speaks elsewhere as having been slaves to their lusts in ignorance (i. 14). But whether Jew or Gentile, when they had once tasted the joy of this purer service, this law of obedience which made

them truly free, they would be strengthened to suffer in the flesh rather than fall back upon their former life. The time would seem enough, far more than enough, to have been thus defiled. All was God's; all that remained must be given to Him with strenuous devotion.

St. Peter seems to place in contrast, as he describes the two ways of life, two words, one by which he denotes the service of God, by the other devotion to the world and its attractions. The former (*θέλημα*) implies a pleasure and joy; it is the will of God, that which He delights in, and which He makes to be a joy to those who serve Him. The other (*βούλημα*) has a sense of longing, unsatisfied want, a state which craves for something which it cannot attain. St. Paul describes it as "led away by divers lusts, ever learning" (but in an evil school), "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, corrupted in mind, reprobate" (2 Tim. iii. 7). Such is the desire of the Gentiles. The Apostle describes it in his next words: *To have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries.* How gross heathendom can be our missionaries from time to time reveal to us. All the corruptions which they describe were reigning in full power round about these converts. When men change the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of corruptible man or even worse, and worship and serve the creature, their own animal passions, rather than the Creator, there is no depth of degradation to which they may not sink. St. Paul has painted for us some dark pictures of what such lives could be (Rom. i. 24–32; Col. iii. 5–8). But though Christianity in our own land have forced sin to veil some of its fouler aspects, vice has not changed its nature. The

same passions rule in the hearts of those who live to the lusts of men, and not to the will of God. The flesh warreth against the Spirit, even if the Spirit be not utterly quenched, and brings men into its slavery. For the sake of Christ, then, and for love of the brethren, the faithful have need still to be proclaiming, *Let the time past suffice*, and by their actions to testify that they are willing to suffer in the flesh, if so be they may thereby be sustained in the battle against sin and may strengthen their brethren to walk in a new way.

Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. The godless love to be a large company, that they may keep one another in heart. Hence they who have been of them, and would fain withdraw, have no easy task; and to win new comrades sinners are ever most solicitous. Their invitations at first will take a friendly tone. Solomon understood them well, and described them in warning to his son: "Come with us," they say: "let us lay wait for blood; let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause; let us swallow them up alive as Sheol, and whole as those that go down into the pit. We shall find all precious substance; we shall fill our houses with spoil. Thou shalt cast thy lot among us; we will all have one purse" (Prov. i. 11–14). This is one fashion of their excess of riot, but there are many more. The Apostle's words picture their life as an overflow, a deluge. And the figure is not strange in Holy Writ. "The floods of ungodly men made me afraid," says the Psalmist (Psalm xviii. 14); and St. Jude, writing about the same time as St. Peter and of the same evil days, calls such sinners "wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shames" (Jude 14). "Shames," he says, because the floods of excess pour

on in overwhelming abundance, and those who escape from them do so only with much suffering in the flesh, sent of God, to set them free from sin.

And if there be no hope of winning recruits or alluring back those who have escaped, the godless follow another course. They hate, and persecute, and malign. Ever since the days of Cain this has been the policy of the wicked, though not all push it so far as did the first murderer (1 John iii. 12). For the life of the righteous is a constant reproach to them. They have made their own choice, but it yields them no comfort; and if one means of making others as wretched as themselves fails, they take another. They point the finger of hatred and scorn at the faithful. To the Greeks Christ's faith was foolishness. The Athenians, full of this world's wisdom, asked about Paul, "What will this babbler say?" and mocked as they heard of the resurrection of the dead. With them and such as they this life is all. But the Christian has his consolation: he has committed his cause to another Judge, before whom they also who speak evil of him must appear.

Who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. The Christian looks on to the coming judgement. He can therefore disregard the censures of men. Neither the penalties nor the revilings of the world trouble him. They are a part of the judgement in the present life; by them God is chastening him, preparing him by the suffering in the flesh to be more ready for the coming of the Lord. In that day it will be seen how the servant has been made like unto his Master, how he has welcomed the purging which Christ gives to His servants that they may bring forth more fruit. He believes, yea knows, that in the

Judge who has been teaching and judging him here day by day he will find a Mediator and a Saviour. With the unbeliever all is otherwise. He has refused correction, has chosen his own path, and drawn away his neck from the yoke of Christ; his judgment is all yet to come. The Judge is ready, but He is full of mercy. St. Peter's phrase implies this. It tells of readiness, but also of holding back, of a desire to spare. He is on His throne, the record is prepared, but yet He waits; He is Himself the long-suffering Vine-dresser who pleads, "Let it alone this year also."

Such has been the mercy of God even from the days of Eden. In the first temptation Eve adds one sin upon another. First she listens to the insidious questioning which proclaims the speaker a foe to God: then without remonstrance she hears God's truth declared a lie; hearkens to an aspersion of the Divine goodness; then yields to the tempter, sins, and leads her husband into sin. Not till then does God's judgement fall, which might have fallen at the first offence; and when it is pronounced, it is full of pity, and gives more space for repentance. So, though the Judge be ready, His mercy waits. For He will judge the dead as well as the living, and while men live His compassion goes forth in its fulness to the ignorant and them that are out of the way.

For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. "*Unto this end*"—what does it signify? What but that God has ever been true to the name under which He first revealed Himself: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious" (Exod. xxxiv. 6); that He has been preaching the Gospel to sinners by His dispensations from

the first day until now? Thus was the Gospel preached unto Abraham (Gal. iii. 8) when he was called from the home of his fathers, and pointed forward through a life of trial to a world-wide blessing. Heeding the lesson, he was gladdened by the knowledge of the day of Christ. In like manner and unto this end was the Gospel sent to God's people in the wilderness (Heb. iv. 2), even as unto us; but the word of hearing did not profit them. With many of them God was not well pleased. Yet He showed them in signs His Gospel sacraments. They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, did all eat the same spiritual meat, and all drank the same spiritual drink (1 Cor. x. 2–4), for Christ was with them, as their Rock of refreshing, all their journey through the desert, preaching the Gospel by visitations now of mercy, now of affliction. Unto this end He brought them many a time under the yoke of their enemies; unto this end He sent them into captivity. Thus were they being judged, as men count judgements, if haply they might listen in this life to the gospel of trial and pain, and so live at last, as God counts life, in the spirit, when the final judgement-day is over. They are dead, but to every generation of them was the Gospel preached, that God might gather Him a great multitude to stand on His right hand in the day of account.

Some have applied the words of this verse to the sinners of the days of Noah, connecting them closely with iii. 19; and truly, though they be but one example out of a world of mercies, they are very notable. They were doomed; they were dead while they lived: "Everything that is in the earth shall die" (Gen. vi. 17). Yet to them the preacher was sent, and unto this end: that though they were to be

drowned in the Deluge, and so in men's sight be judged, their souls might be saved, as God would have them saved, in the great day of the Lord. But every visitation is a gospel, a gospel unto this end: that through judgement here a people may be made ready in God's sight to be called unto His rest.

Few passages have more powerful lessons than this for every age. The world is full of suffering in the flesh. Who has not known it in many kinds? But it is in consequence, to those who will hear, very full of Gospel sermons. They cry aloud, Sin no more; the time past may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. Suffering does not mean that God is not full of love; rather it is a token that, in His great love, He is training us, opening our eyes to our wrong-doings that we may cast them off, and giving us a true standard to judge between the desire of the Gentiles and the will of God. And though men may look on us as sore afflicted, our Father, when the rest of our time in the flesh shall be ended, will give us the true life with Him in the spirit.

XIII

CHRISTIAN SERVICE FOR GOD'S GLORY

XIII

CHRISTIAN SERVICE FOR GOD'S GLORY

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer: above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins: using hospitality one to another without murmuring: according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, *speaking* as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, *ministering* as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."—1 PETER iv. 7–11.

BUT the end of all things is at hand. Well-nigh two thousand years have passed away since the Apostle wrote these words. What are we to think of the teaching they convey? For it is not St. Peter's teaching only. Those who laboured with him were all of the same mind; all gave the same note of warning to their converts. St. Paul exhorts the Philippians, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. iv. 5); and in the first letter to the Corinthians the last words before his benediction are to the same purport: "Maran atha" (1 Cor. xvi. 22); that is, The Lord cometh. St. James preaches, "Stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James v. 8). To the Hebrews the Apostle writes, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37).

While St. John, who lived longer than any of the rest, conveys the warning even in more solemn tones: "Little children, it is the last hour" (1 John ii. 18). Are we to look on these admonitions as so many mistaken utterances? Are we to think that the disciples had misunderstood the Lord's teaching, or would they say the same words if they were with us to-day?

We may allow that those who had been present at the Ascension, and had heard the words of the angels declaring that "this same Jesus should so come as they had seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11), might expect His return to judge the world to be not far distant. But, in whatever they say in reference thereto, their main concern is that men should be ready. "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh," is the ground-text of all their exhortations. Now had arrived the fulness of the time (Gal. iv. 4) in which God had sent forth His Son, born of a woman; and if we take the verb of St. Peter's sentence ἤγγικε, "has come near," we feel that he viewed the new era on which the world had entered in this light. And so did the other Apostles. One says, "Now once in the end of the ages hath Christ been manifested" (Heb. ix. 26); another teaches that things of old "were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). God has spoken aforetime in many portions and in many ways, but in the end of these days He hath spoken in His Son (Heb. i. 2). All things are now summed up in Christ; He is the end of all things. Prophecy, type, sacrifice, all have passed away. There will come no new revelation; no word more will be added to the Divine book. Its lessons will find in each generation new illustrations, new applications, but will admit no

change of form or substance. The Christian dispensation, be it long or short, is the last time; it will close with the Second Advent. And continual preparedness is to be the Christian's attitude. And this is the purport of St. Peter's next exhortations, which are as forceful to-day as they were eighteen hundred years ago.

Be ye therefore of sound mind. Exactly the counsel which should follow the previous lesson. It was misinterpreted at first, as it has been since. We know how unwisely the Thessalonians behaved when they had been told by St. Paul, "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. v. 2). The Apostle learnt that they were sorely disturbed, and wrote them a second letter, from which we can gather how far they had wandered from soundness of mind. At first the Apostle speaks gently: "Be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present" (2 Thess. ii. 2). But soon he shows us how the excitement had operated. Some among them had begun to walk disorderly, apparently thinking that they might live upon the community, working not at all, but being busybodies. These made, no doubt, the approach of the day of the Lord their pretext. St. Paul bids such men in quietness to work and eat their own bread. To be found at their duty was the best way of preparing for the end.

How soundness of mind may serve the Church of Christ is seen in the settlement of that murmuring which arose (Acts vi. 1) as soon as the Christian disciples began to be multiplied in Jerusalem. It was the Grecian Jews who complained that their widows

were neglected. The Apostles wisely withdrew from the distribution about which the complaint was made, and more wisely still gave the oversight into the hands of Greeks (as the forms of all their names bear witness) who would be fully trusted by the murmurers. "And the word of God increased." The pages of Church history supply examples in abundance of the need in religious matters for this soundness of mind. We need not go back to very ancient times. What sore evils led to and arose out of the peasant war in Germany in the days of the Reformation, followed by those excesses which disgraced the name of Christianity in Münster and other parts of Westphalia! And in our own land both at that time and subsequently the unwise enthusiasm of those who acted as though whatever had been must be wrong hindered sorely the temperate efforts of the more conservative and sober minds; while undue prominence given to single doctrines of the Gospel has many times warped men's minds; and does so still, making the cause of Christ to be hardly spoken of. A sense of proportion is a gift which the Church may fitly pray for in her members, and that, while they seek to foster the sevenfold graces of the Holy Spirit, they may ever keep in mind the mercy of Him who bestows only a portion on each of us as we can receive it, and makes no man the steward of them all.

And be sober unto prayer. The Apostle selects one example wherein the sound mind ought to be sought after, and he has chosen it so as to be of general application. The wisdom to which he is exhorting is needed for all men, both those who teach and those who hear, those who serve tables and those who are served thereby. Many members of the Christian body,

however, will not be concerned with such special duties. But all will pray, and so to prayer he applies his precept. *Be sober.* A sound mind will preserve us from extravagance in our approach unto God. For even here extravagance may intrude. The Corinthian Church had gone very far wrong in this respect. Over-elated, losing soundness of mind, through the bestowal of certain gifts, they had introduced such irregularities into their religious meetings that St. Paul speaks of occasions when they might have been regarded as madmen (1 Cor. xiv. 23). These were public prayers. St. James applies the same standard to private prayers: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (James iv. 3). There is no true prayer in your petitions. You have selected in your own hearts what you would fain have and do, and you come before God with these as your supplications. There is no thought in them of yielding to God's will, but only the sense that if your petitions were granted you would reap a present satisfaction. Ye ask amiss. Many a heart can testify to the proneness to err thus by want of sobriety.

Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves. Soundness of mind and sobriety should dominate every part of the believer's life; but there are other virtues of pre-eminent excellence, unto which, though they be far above him, he is encouraged to aspire. Of these St. Peter, like St. Paul (1 Cor. xiii. 13), places love at the summit, above all things. The word he uses signifies that perfect love which is the attribute of God Himself. To frail humanity it must ever be an ideal. But the Apostle in his second epistle (2 Peter i. 7) has given a progressive list of graces to be sought after in a holy life, a series of mountain summits each above the other, and each made

visible through the one below it. Here, too, love comes as the climax; and the Revised Version marks it as far above mere human affection: "In your love of the brethren supply also love." Here is no anticlimax, if we once appreciate the grandeur of the concluding term

In the present verse, however, the Apostle exhorts that this Divine quality is to be exercised by the converts among themselves, and exercised with much earnestness and diligence. It is to be the grace which pervades all their lives, and extends itself to every condition thereof. But we understand why St. Peter has used this word for love as soon as we come to the clause which follows: *For love covereth a multitude of sins.* To cover sin is Godlike. It has been often asked, Whose sins are covered by this love, those of him who loves, or of him who is loved? The question can have but one answer. There is nothing in the New Testament to warrant such a doctrine as that love towards one's fellow-men will hide, atone for, or cancel any man's sins. When our Lord says of the woman who was a sinner, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much" (Luke vii. 47), it is not love to the brethren of which He is speaking, but love to God, which she had manifested by her actions toward Himself; and when He presently adds, "Thy faith hath saved thee," He tells us the secret of her availing love. But when men are animated by that love toward their neighbours which shows likest God's, they are tender to their offences; they look to the future more than to the past, hoping all things, believing all things; they have tasted God's mercy in the pardon of their own sins, and labour to do thus unto others, to cast their sins out of sight, to put

them, as God does when He forgives, behind their back, as though in being forgiven they were also forgotten. The phrase is quoted by St. Peter from Prov. x. 12, where Solomon says, "Love covereth *all* sins," and our Lord's words to St. Peter himself (Matt. xviii. 22) about forgiving until seventy times seven times practically set no limit to the extension of pardon to the repentant. Thus taught, the Apostle uses the noble word *ἀγάπη* of human tenderness to offenders, because he would urge men to a boundless, all-embracing, Godlike pity for sinners.

Using hospitality one to another without murmuring. We need only reflect on the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles to realise how large a part hospitality must have played in the early Church as soon as the preachers extended their labours beyond Jerusalem. The house of Simon the tanner, where Peter was entertained many days (ix. 43); the friends who at Antioch received Paul and Barnabas and kept them for a whole year (xi. 26); the petition of Lydia, "Come into my house, and abide there" (xvi. 15); and Jason's reception of Paul and Silas at Thessalonica (xvii. 7), are but illustrations of what must have been the general custom. Nor would such welcome be needed for the Apostles alone. The Churches must have been very familiar with cases of brethren driven from their own country by persecution, or severed from their own kinsfolk by the adoption of the new faith. To such the kind offices of the Christian congregations must have been constantly extended, so that hospitality was consecrated into a blessed and righteous duty. To be "given to hospitality" (Rom. xii. 13) is reckoned among the marks whereby it shall be known that believers, being many, are one body in Christ; and

from the salutations in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans we can frame a picture of the large work of lodging and caring for strangers as it entered into the duties of a Christian life. The brethren at Rome are exhorted to receive and help Phœbe, the bringer of the Epistle, because she had been a succourer of many, and of Paul himself. Of Priscilla and Aquila, who are next named, we know that they were friends and fellow-workers with St. Paul in Corinth, and that in Ephesus they showed their Christian love toward the stranger Apollos; and not only so, but they provided a place where the brethren might assemble for their worship. Later on is mentioned Mary, who bestowed much labour on the brethren, Urbanus, a helper in Christ, and the households of Aristobulus and Narcissus, whole families made friends through the extension of hospitality. Of the mother of Rufus St. Paul speaks tenderly as his own mother also. The coupling together of Philologus and Julia suggests that they were husband and wife and had opened their doors to the brethren, and the notice of Nereus and his sister points to similar good offices. And from whatever place the Epistle was sent to Rome, there Tertius, St. Paul's amanuensis, was under the hospitable roof of Gaius, whom he speaks of as the host of the whole Church. Doubtless at times the burden might fall heavily on some of the poorer brethren. Hence the need for the Apostle's addition *without murmuring*. The word is the same which is used (Acts vi. 1) of the complaints of the Grecians. And in this matter, as in all, a sound mind would be called for, that loads might be placed by the Churches only on such as were able to bear them.

The intimate fellowship that would grow out of such exercise of kind offices must have been a power to

encourage greatly the labourers for Christ. As they dwelt together, hours not given to public ministrations would be spent in private converse, and would knit the members together, and forward the common work. As St. Paul writes to Philemon, who appears to have been eminent in good offices, the hearts of the saints were refreshed by this godly intercourse. In friendly communion the love of all would wax warmer, zeal become more earnest, the weak would be strengthened, and the strong grow stronger.

According as each hath receivea a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. The close connexion between *gifts* and *grace* is better marked in the Greek than it can be in the English. The *χαρίσματα* are bestowed upon us by the *χάρις* of God. But every word in the sentence is full of force. Each hath received a gift. None can plead his lack of faculty; none can claim exemption from the duty of ministering; none is so poor but he has something that he can lay out for the brethren. All have time; all have kind words: the least can give, what is the best of gifts, a good example. But what we have is not our own; it is received: and humility would teach us to believe that God has bestowed on us the powers which we are best fitted, by place and opportunities, to use in His service. None can say of any gift, "It is all my own; I may do with it as I please." God has set the world about us full of His exchangers. The poor, the feeble, the doubting, the fearful—these are God's bankers, with whom we may put out our gifts to usury. And Himself is the security for all that we deposit thus: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." Hence we live under the responsibility of stewardship.

And every man's gift is given to profit withal (*πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον*, 1 Cor. xii. 7). The Greek implies that it must be shared with others. Nor can any of us make it a profit to himself till he have found the way to make it profitable to his brethren.

That he may give more precision to his counsel, the Apostle proceeds to speak of gifts under two heads into which they are naturally divided. First come those which St. Paul (Rom. xii. 6–8) ranges under the head of prophecy, embracing therein teaching and exhortation likewise: *If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God.* The first Christian preachers must have gained their knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus by listening to the narratives of the twelve, and must have gone forth to give their teaching orally. The training of those who were appointed to minister in the various places whither the apostolic missions penetrated must have been of the same kind. In those first years there was work to be done which would seem more important than the writing of a Gospel history. When such preachers published to the congregations what they had learnt of the Master's lessons, their sermons would be orally given, and though conveying the same instruction, would be liable to constant modifications of words. It was from such oral teaching that the variations found in the Gospel narratives probably had their origin. The preachers gave the spirit, and as nearly as possible the text, of what they had been taught. Perhaps by memoranda or otherwise, they would refresh their knowledge of the apostolic words, so as to adhere as much as might be to what they had first received. The word *λόγια*—oracles—which the Apostle here employs, seems intended to remind such preachers and teachers that

they now, as the Jews of old, had received "living oracles" (Acts vii. 38), words by which spiritual life was conveyed, to deliver to the Church. Those of them who were Jews would call to mind how God's prophets had constantly prefaced their message with "Thus saith the Lord" or concluded it with the Divine accrediting, "I am the Lord"; and that the Christian prophet must bear in mind that he is only an ambassador, and must abide by his commission, if he would speak with authority, that as a steward he must ever think of the account to be some day given of "the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2) with which he was entrusted, and must "handle aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15). For all such is St. Peter's admonition, *If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God.*

And next he turns to those gifts which are to be exercised in deeds, and not in words: *If any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth.* Under "ministry" St. Paul classes (Rom. xii. 7, 8) giving, ruling, showing mercy. These are duties which secure the temporal condition of the Church and her members. The New Testament story suggests many offices which could be discharged by those who had not devoted themselves in a special manner to the ministry of the word. How much service would be called for by those collections for the saints which St. Paul urges so frequently upon the Churches! How many houses would find employment in such labours as were exhibited in the home of Dorcas! How many a traveller, bent on his secular work, would carry apostolic messages or letters to the flocks of the dispersion! To these may be added those offices of mercy which St. James describes as *θρησκεία*, outward acts of religion, to visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction.

The strength which God supplieth embraces every faculty or possession, be it wealth, administrative skill, or special knowledge. The physician and the craftsman alike may spend their powers for Christ. All may be consecrated, ministered, as supplied of God. And it is a gain to the Church when, following the apostolic pattern, these duties of external religion are severed from the prophecy, the spiritual work of the teacher.

That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. This is to be the thought which animates all who minister: that each man's service may be so rendered to his brethren that it will work for the glory of God. And Christ has led the way. He testifies in His final prayer, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do" (John xvii. 4). Of our work we can use no such words. We are but unprofitable servants. In many things we offend all. But all may labour in the Christlike spirit; and thus through Him, through service rendered in His name and for His sake, will God be glorified. The thought of Jesus humbling Himself, taking the form of a servant, testifying of Himself, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many," can give a dignity to lowliest labour, and at the same time can impart consolation to the true labourers, for whom this mighty ransom has been paid, their inheritance won, their salvation achieved; while the Conqueror of sin and death, their Redeemer, has taken His seat at God's right hand, where worshipping spirits ever praise Him, saying, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory, and the honour, and the power" (Rev. iv. 11).

XIV

THE BELIEVER'S DOUBLE JOY

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"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are ye*; because the *Spirit* of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you."—1 PETER iv. 12–14.

AFTER the benediction in ver. 11, we might have supposed that the exhortations of the Apostle were ended. But he now proceeds to make general application of the lessons which above (ii. 19) he had confined to a particular class: the Christians who were in slavery. And the times appear to have called for consolation. The Churches were in great tribulation. St. Peter speaks here, more than in any other passage of the Epistle, as if persecution were afflicting the whole Christian body: *Beloved*—the word embraces them all—*think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, . . . as though a strange thing happened unto you.* His strong word implies extreme suffering. St. John uses it (Rev. xviii. 9, 18) of the burning up of the mystical Babylon, and it is found nowhere else in the New Testament. A trial meriting this description was harassing the Asian Christians; but spite of the intensity of suffering, which may be in-

ferred from his language, he bids the converts not to wonder at it or deem it other than their proper lot: "Think it not strange."

He does not enter upon reasons for his admonition, or he might have selected a goodly list of Old Testament saints who for their faith were called to suffer. For the Jewish brethren, Joseph and David, Elijah and Micaiah, David and his companions in exile, Job and Nehemiah, would have been forcible examples of suffering for righteousness. The Apostle, however, selects only the loftiest instance. Christ, the Master whom they were pledged to serve, had suffered, and had said, besides, that all who would follow Him must take up the cross. Need they wonder, then, if in their case they found the Lord's teaching coming true?

But, in describing the purpose of their trials, the Apostle introduces some words which place their affliction in a distinct light: *Which cometh upon you to prove you*—literally, for your proving (*πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν*). And the word is that which is constantly used of *temptation*, whether sent of God or coming in some other way. When viewed as a process of proving, the believers would be able to find some contentment under their persecutions. God was putting them to the test. He would know if they are in earnest in His service, and so they are cast into the furnace, God's wonted discipline. The prophet Zechariah tells both of the process, and the God-intended result: "I will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. xii. 9). And the Psalmist bears like testimony: "The Lord trieth the righteous" (Psalm xi. 5), and says that for those who are

found faithful the end is blessedness: "We went through fire and through water, but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psalm lxvi. 12).

Such thoughts would yield comfort to those for whom St. Peter immediately wrote. They were suffering for Christ's sake; their faith in Him was being tested. But the Apostle's words are left for the edification of all generations of believers. Throughout all time and everywhere there has been abundance of grief and pain. How may sufferers to-day participate in the apostolic consolation? How may they learn to think it not strange that they are afflicted?

The Apostle's words supply the answer to such questions. And they are no light or infrequent questionings both for ourselves and others. Men are prone to lament over temporal losses or bodily sufferings, their own or others', in tones which convey the idea that such trials will in the end be compensated and made efficacious for the future blessing of the sufferer. The New Testament has no such doctrine. "The trial which cometh upon you to prove you," is St. Peter's expression. There is much suffering in the world which is in no sense a participation of the sufferings of Christ, in no sense a God-sent trial for proving the faith of the sufferer.

Here, if honestly questioned, the individual conscience will give the true answer; and if that inward witness condemn the life for no excesses, of which suffering is the appointed fruit, if the bodily pains be not the outcome of a life lived to the flesh, nor the sorrow and poverty the result of follies and extravagance aforetime, then, with the anguish and distress which God hath sent (for we may then count them as of His sending), the Spirit will have bestowed light that we may discern

their purpose, light which will show us God's hand weaning us from the world and making us ready for going home, or, it may be, giving to others through us His teaching in message and example. Then the enlightened and pacified soul will be able to rejoice amid pain, conscious of purification; and will out of the midst of sorrow see God's designs justified. Satan will look on such times as his opportunity, and suggest to the Christian that he is unduly afflicted and forgotten of God; but the joy which comes from being able to look trouble in the face, as sent by a Father, drives away despondency and puts the enemy to rout. He is triumphant who can rest on a faithful God, with an assurance that with the temptation He will also make the way of escape, that he may be able to endure it (1 Cor. x. 13).

But dare we then pray, as Christ has taught us, "Lead us not into temptation"? Yes, if we ponder rightly on the purport of our petition. Christ does not bid us pray to God not to try us; He Himself made no such prayer for His disciples; He was Himself submitted to such trial: "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief" (Isa. liii. 10). Nay, one Evangelist (Mark i. 12) tells us how He was not led, but *driven* forth, of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Yet He taught the prayer to His disciples, and He did so because He knew both what was in man, and what was in the world. In the latter since sin entered, the tempter has found manifold enticements to lead men astray. All that belongs to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, riches, influence, beauty, popularity, prosperity of every kind, may be used as tests of faith, may be made to glorify God; but they can also be perverted

in the using. And there dwell within man strong desires, which he is prompted to gratify at times, without heeding whether their gratification be right or wrong; and when desire and opportunity meet, there is peril to the tempted.

> "How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
> Makes deeds ill done!"

And when desire has once gained the mastery, the next yielding is sooner made; the forbidden path becomes the constant walk; the moral principle—the Godlike in the conscience—is neglected; men grow weaker, are led away of their own lusts and enticed.

On the other hand, if the unlawful desire be resisted from the first, each succeeding conflict will offer less hardship, each new victory be more easily gained, and the virtuous act will become a holy habit; the man will walk with God. For this end God uses the evil, of which Satan is the father, to be a discipline, and turns the snares of the enemy into a means of strength for those whom he would captivate. Knowing all this, Christ has left us His prayer. In it He would teach us to ask that God should protect us in such wise that the desire to sin which dwells within us may not be roused to activity by opportunities of indulgence, or if we are thrown where such opportunities exist, the desire may be killed in our hearts. Thus our peril will be lessened, and we shall be helped to walk in the right way, through His grace. Our strong passions will grow weaker, and our weak virtues stronger, day by day.

And such a petition should check all overweening confidence in our own power to withstand temptation, all overreadiness to put ourselves in the way of danger

that we may show our strength, and that we can stand though others may fall. The sin and folly of such presumption would be constantly present to St. Peter's mind. He could not forget how his own faith failed when he would make a show of it by walking to meet Jesus over the sea of Galilee. Still less could he forget that utterance of self-confidence, which thought scorn of trials to come, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." It needed but the timid suggestion of a servant-maid to call forth that manifestation of feebleness for which only tears of deepest penitence could atone, and which remained the darkest memory in the Apostle's life. He above all men knew to the full the need we have to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

And in respect of courting trial, even when the suffering to be encountered would be allowed by all men to be suffering for righteousness' sake, the New Testament gives us many lessons that we should not offer ourselves to unnecessary danger. Our Lord Himself (John viii. 59), when the Jews took up stones to cast at Him, hid Himself and conveyed Himself out of harm's way. At another time we are told, "He would not walk in Judæa because the Jews sought to kill Him" (John vii. 1). St. Paul, too (2 Cor. xi. 33), to avoid uncalled-for suffering, was let down by the wall of Damascus, and afterwards made use of the dissensions of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Acts xxiii. 6) to divert the storm which their combined animosity would have raised against him. In this spirit St. Peter gives his counsel. "Make sure," he would say, "that the trials you bear are sent to prove you. Let constant self-questioning testify that they *are* proving you ; then wonder not that they are sent, but *rejoice inasmuch*

as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ. He who thus learns the blessing of trial thanks the Lord for his troublous days. He has a double joy, rejoicing in this life, sorrowful yet alway rejoicing; and is assured that at the revelation of Christ's glory his joy shall be still more abundant.

If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye. It was a joy to the Apostles (Acts v. 41) at the beginning of their ministry that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name. Their offence is described as speaking in the name of Jesus, and filling Jerusalem with their teaching. The feeling of their persecutors was so strong that they were minded to slay them, but upon wiser counsel they only beat them and let them go. St. Paul's commission to Damascus (Acts ix. 14) was to bind all that called upon the name of Christ, and his work after his conversion was to be "to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel." What such preaching would be, we gather from St. Peter's words (Acts ii. 22). They taught men that Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God by powers, and wonders, and signs, had been crucified and slain by the Jews, but that God had raised Him from the dead; that He was now exalted by the right hand of God and was ordained of God (Acts x. 42) to be the Judge of quick and dead; that to Him all the prophets bare witness that through His name every one that believeth on Him should receive remission of sins. St. Paul and the rest preached the same doctrine. All that had happened in Christ's life was "according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4) of the Old Testament; Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. ii. 2), Jesus and the resurrection (Acts xvii. 18), are the topics constant in his letters and on his lips.

And for their doctrine and their faith preachers and hearers suffered persecution and reproach.

In our land suffering such as theirs is no more laid upon us, but for all that the reproach of Christ has not ceased. Our days are specially marked by a desire for demonstration on every subject, and it comes to pass thereby that those who are willing in spiritual things to walk by faith rank in the estimation of many as the less enlightened portion of the world, and are pictured as such in much of our modern literature. All that tells of miracle in the life of Jesus is by many cast altogether aside, as alien to the reign of law under which the world exists; and the Gospel narratives of the virgin-birth, the wonderful works, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are treated as the invention of the fervid imaginations of the first followers of Jesus; while to cling to them as verities, and to their importance and significance in the work of the world's salvation, stamps men as laggards in the march of modern speculation. To accept the New Testament story as the fulfilment of predictions in the Old is reckoned by many for ungrounded superstition; and among the unbelieving there are keen eyes still which gladly mark the slips and stumblings of professing Christians, and throw the obloquy of individuals broadcast upon the whole body.

To hold fast faith at such a time, to accept the Gospels as true and their teaching as the words of eternal life, to see in Christ the Redeemer appointed from eternity by the foreknowledge of God, and to believe that in Him His people find remission of sins, to see and acknowledge above the reign of law the power of the almighty Lawgiver—these things are still beset with trials for those who will live in earnest according to such faith; and if we receive less of the

blessing which St. Peter here speaks of as accompanying tne reproach of Christ, may we not fear that we exhibit less of the zeal and fervour of the Christians to whom he wrote?

Because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. In the former clause the Apostle, speaking of the joy of believers, exhorted the converts to a present rejoicing, even in the midst of sufferings, because these were borne for Christ's sake, that so, when He shall appear in whose name they have suffered, their rejoicing may be still more abundant. In like manner he seems here to regard their blessedness in a double aspect. The Spirit of glory rests upon them. A power is imparted to them whereby they accept their pains gladly, and therein glorify God, and the same Spirit fills them with a sense of future glory. Like Stephen before his persecutors, they become filled with the Holy Ghost, their spirits are lifted heavenwards, and even now they behold the glory of God, and Jesus sitting on the right hand of God. Thus suffering is robbed of its sting, and Christ's reproach becomes a present blessing.

St. Paul combines the same thoughts in his appeal to the Roman Christians. "Let us rejoice," he urges, "in the hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 2). This is the glory to be revealed in the presence of Jesus Christ, that eternal weight of glory which affliction worketh for us more and more exceedingly. But he continues, "Let us rejoice also in our tribulations," knowing that by them we may glorify God in our bodies, and that they are the pledge of glory to come. "For tribulation worketh patience, and patience probation, and probation hope, and hope putteth not to shame"—it will not be disappointed; fruition will surely

come—"because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us." This is the Spirit of God of which St. Peter here speaks. It rests like the cloud of glory above the cherubim, and bestows all spiritual power and blessing; it rests on the suffering believer, and gives him rest.

The Authorised Version has here retained a clause which appears to have been at first but an explanatory note, written in the margin of some copy, and then to have been incorporated with the text: "On their part He is evil-spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.' We cannot regret the preservation of such a note. It dates back to very early times. The student who made it could write in the language of the New Testament and in its spirit also. It gives us the sense which was then felt to have most prominence and to be the most important. The way of Christ was evil-spoken of, and it could be no strange thing in those days for His followers to be put to fiery trial. Yet the writer feels that the blessedness of the believer is most secured who, regardless of blasphemers around him, strives with all his powers that in his body, whether by life or by death, Christ shall be magnified.

XV

THE RIGHTEOUS HAVE JUDGEMENT HERE

XV

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"For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if *a man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name. For the time *is come* for judgement to begin at the house of God: and if *it begin* first at us, what *shall be* the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator."—1 PETER iv. 15–19.

THE Apostle now goes one step farther in his exhortations. The brethren are suffering for Christ's cause, and may draw comfort from Christ's example, and be encouraged to patience under their persecutions. But these very sufferings, he would have them see, are God's judgement on His servants in this world, that they may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they are called to suffer. They must be watchful not to deserve punishment for offences that bring disgrace on themselves and on the cause of Christ.

For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters. He appears to divide these offences into two classes, made distinct by the recurrence of ὡς, "as." The first three concern crimes of which the laws of any land would naturally take cognisance. "Evil-doer" was the

word employed by the Jews when they brought our Lord to Pilate: "If he were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee" (John xviii. 30). The last-named offence, meddling in other men's matters, would bring upon the Christians social odium and render them generally unpopular; and it was precisely the kind of conduct likely to prevail in such a time. We have already found the Apostle exhorting Christian subjects not to think lightly of the duty of obedience to heathen rulers, and the like counsel was given to Christian slaves with heathen masters and to Christian wives with heathen husbands. Such persons would often be tempted to step beyond their province with advice, and perhaps remonstrance, and to display a sense of superiority in so doing which would be galling to those who were of another mind. St. Peter's word to describe this fault is his own, but the idea that such fault needed checking is not wanting in the teaching of St. Paul, and may be taken as evidence that such an interfering spirit prevailed. He speaks of those "who work not at all, but are busybodies" (2 Thess. iii. 11), and to Timothy of those who are "tattlers and busybodies" (1 Tim. v. 13).

St. Peter has ranged these offences in a descending order, placing the least culpable last; and their compass embraces all that rightly might come under the ban or the law or incur the just odium of society. To suffer for such things would disgrace the Christian name; but there is no shame in suffering as a Christian, but rather a reason for giving glory to God. That the name was bestowed as a reproach seems probable from Acts xi. 26, and still more from the mocking tone in which it is used by Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 28); and in the earliest apologists we find this confirmed. "The accusation

against us," says Justin Martyr, "is that we are Christians"; and in another place, "We ask that the actions of all those who are accused before you should be examined, so that he who is convicted may be punished as a malefactor, but not as a Christian."

But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name. That is, let him be thankful and show his thankfulness that he has been called to bear the name of Christ and to suffer for it. The Authorised Version, adopting a different reading, has "on this behalf." But the sense is nothing different. He is to rejoice that this lot has befallen him, for it is of God's great mercy that we are purified here by trial; he who has not been tried has not entered on the way of salvation. "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord," was the petition of David; and they are more blessed who feel that hand in their correction than those who are cut away from it. It is a terrible lot to think of, if we be abandoned by Him to worldly prosperity. St. Paul congratulates the Philippians "because to them it had been granted, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer on His behalf" (Phil. i. 29); and to another Church (Eph. iii. 13) he declares that his own tribulations, endured for their sakes, ought to be to them a glory, because they made known how precious those believers were in the sight of their heavenly Father for whose sake He allowed another to be afflicted that they might be drawn more effectually unto Him. And if this be so, how much cause have they to bless and glorify God who may be permitted to think that He is using their afflictions for a like purpose.

For the time is come for judgement to begin at the house of God. The time is come. Why does the Apostle

speak thus? Because the final era of Divine revelation has begun. God has spoken unto men by His Son, and He by His incarnation and death has brought life and immortality to light. The new and living way is opened. We live in the fulness of time, when the faithful, having the testimony of those who companied with Christ, can love Him, though they see Him not, can rejoice in Him, and can receive, with full assurance, the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Such souls have their judgement here. With them God's judgement is neither postponed, nor is it penal. It is disciplinary and corrective both for themselves and others. They are the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, and can be set forth as the salt of the earth, the light of the world. Of such judgement and its purpose St. Paul also speaks to the Corinthians: "When we" (the servants of Christ) "are judged" (by suffering in this life), "we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32). All chastening while it lasts is grievous, yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby. And by such chastisement God prepares Him witnesses to the truth and preciousness of Christianity; and so long as this time, which is now come, shall continue, so long will God try, and make judgement of, His servants in every generation.

In St. Peter's words we have an echo of prophecy. When the hand of the Lord carried Ezekiel in vision back from Babylon to Jerusalem, he heard the voice of God commanding the destroyers, "Begin at My sanctuary" (Ezek. ix. 6). Yet in that evil age some were found who had been sighing and crying for all the abominations that were done in the midst of the city.

These holy ones, living in a naughty world, were God's witnesses, feeling His judgements, but receiving His mark on their foreheads, that they should not be destroyed with the sinners. Years passed away, and at length the Lord of the Temple has Himself come. He began His judgement at the house of God, casting out all that defiled it. But it then had become a mere "house of merchandise"; nay, at a later day He named it "a den of thieves." At last He left it for ever. Then it ceased to be God's house, and though it was spared some forty years, its fate was fixed when He went forth from it (Matt. xxiv. 1, 2) and said that not one stone of it should be left upon another. Henceforth He will have other temples in the hearts of those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. These are now the house of God. With them He exercises judgement constantly for their instruction and amendment. But it shall turn unto them for a testimony in the end. Not a hair of their head shall perish; in their patience they shall win their souls.

And if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? The Apostle joins himself with those of the house of God who will feel the pressure of temporal judgement. He is not forgetful of the Lord's saying, "Simon, behold Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat, but I made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not" (Luke xxii. 31). He knows that he will be tried, but the end to him and all the faithful is that they may be brought into the Father's home. To those who obey not the Gospel the doom pronounced against the Temple answers the Apostle's question. They have had their days of probation, and are like to Jerusalem at the time of the Lord's lamentation, "If thou hadst known in this day

the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke xx. 42). They cannot be said to disobey a law of which they have not heard; the glad tidings have been preached unto them, but have found no welcome. As of the doomed city, so of them, it may be said, "Ye would not." After their hardness and their impenitent heart, they have treasured up for themselves wrath in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgement of God.

And if the righteous scarcely is saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? The righteous is he who follows after righteousness, but who feels that, in the midst of his efforts of faith, he needs to cry, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." It is of God's mercy that He accepts the aim and purpose of our lives, and counts not by their results. All men are beset with temptation; in many things we all offend. Works of righteousness bear the taint; they come many a time from wrong motives. The best of us need both the Father's chastisement, and, like Peter, the Saviour's prayers, and the Holy Spirit's guidance. This is what the Apostle means by "scarcely saved." By Divine help Christ's servants are brought nearer and nearer to the ideal, "Be ye holy." But though they live not in sin, sin lives in them; and the warfare with evil is not ended till the burden of the flesh is laid aside. And as there are degrees in the progress of the righteous up the hill of faith, so are there in the falling away of the wicked; and St. Peter in his language appears to have had this in mind, for of the ungodly and sinner he uses a verb in the singular (*φανεῖται*). Where shall *he* appear? The man begins as the ungodly, a negative character: he thinks not of God; has no reverence for His law; puts Him away from all his thoughts. But in this

state he will not long remain. There is no standing still in things spiritual. He who does not advance goes backward, and the ungodly soon becomes the wilful sinner. So sure is this development that the Apostle combines the two aspects of the wicked man's life, and asks, not, Where shall they, but Where shall he, appear?

For the judgement which for the righteous begins at God's house, and is wrought out in the trials of this life, awaits the disobedient when life is ended. The Apostle leaves his solemn question unanswered; but at that day there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, only a fearful expectation of judgement. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God then. Hence the greater blessedness of those who are taken into God's hand of judgement now. And thus the Apostle comforts the sufferers.

Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator. Again St. Peter goes back in thought to the words of Christ, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46); and on these he builds his final exhortation, which contains within it consolation in abundance. The test of the faithful is his perfect trust. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15), was the confession which marked Job as more righteous than his advisers. The Revised Version has varied the rendering of the final words in that passage in such wise as to explain how the trust is to be exhibited: "I will wait for Him"—wait, sure that the event will be for my comfort and His glory. This is the spirit which waxes strong in trial. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isa. xl. 31), says the prophet. "None that wait on the

Lord shall be ashamed," is an oft-repeated testimony of the psalmists (Psalms xxv. 3; xxxvii. 34; lxix. 6); and one whose name is a synonym for suffering tells us, "The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him" (Lam. iii. 25). To such trust St. Peter here exhorts, bidding specially them that suffer to rest on the Lord. Though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality, for the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, a trust which they repose in Him while they live here, a treasure guarded by Him in the world to come. St. Paul knows of the efficacy of this perfect trust, for he writes to Timothy, "We labour and strive," counting bodily suffering as nothing, "because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10).

The Apostle links a holy life most closely with this trust in God. In well-doing commit your souls unto Him. No otherwise can His guardianship and aid be hoped for. But the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and with Him to know is to watch over and help. Nor should men sorrow when they suffer according to God's will. Rather it is cause for gladness. For conscience must tell them that they need to be purged from much earthly dross which clings about them. So the fire of trial may be counted among blessings.

And with two words of exceeding comfort St. Peter strengthens the believers in their trust. God is faithful; His compassions fail not: they are new every morning. In moments of despair the sorrowing Christian may feel tempted to cry out, with the Psalmist, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" (Psalm lxxvii. 10), but as he looks

back on the path where God has led him he is convinced of the unwisdom of his questioning, and cries out, "This is my infirmity; I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

And this faithful God is our Creator. In the council of the Godhead it was said in the beginning, "Let us make man in our image." And God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, which made of him a living soul. From God's hand he came forth very good, but sin entered, and the Divine image has been blurred and defaced. Yet in mercy the same heavenly conclave planned the scheme for man's restoration to his first estate. The love which spake to Zion of old speaks through Christ to all mankind. "Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, she may forget; yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. xlix. 15). In the fulness of time God has sent His Son to take hold upon the sons of men, to wear their likeness, to live on earth and die for the souls which He has made. Trust, says the Apostle, in this almighty, unchanging love; trust God, your Father, your Creator. He will succour you against all assaults of evil; He will comfort and support you when it is His desire to prove you; He will crown you, with your Lord, when trials are no more.

XVI

HOW TO TEND THE FLOCK

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"The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away."—1 PETER v. 1–4.

ST. PETER'S last lesson was full of consolation. He showed that it was from God's hand that judgements were sent upon His people to purify them and prepare them for His appearing. With this thought in their minds, he would have the converts rejoice in their discipline, confident in the faithfulness of Him who was trying them. He follows this general message to the Churches with a solemn charge to their teachers. They are specially responsible for the welfare of the brethren. On them it rests by the holiness of their lives and the spirit in which they labour to win men to the faith. *The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you. Therefore*—because I know that the

blessed purpose of trial is not always manifest, and because the hope of the believer needs to be constantly pointed to the faithfulness of God—I exhort you to tend zealously those over whom you are put in charge. "Elders" was the name given at first to the whole body of Christian teachers. No doubt they were chosen at the beginning from the older members of the community, when the Apostles established Churches in their missionary journeys. "They appointed for them elders in every Church" (Acts xiv. 23); and it was the elders of the Church of Ephesus that Paul sent for to Miletus (Acts xx. 17). And St. Peter here contrasts them very pointedly with those of younger years, whom he addresses afterwards. But after it became an official title the sense of seniority would drop away from the word.

It is clear from this passage that in St. Peter's time they were identical with those who were afterwards named bishops. For the word which follows presently in the text and is rendered "exercising the oversight" is literally "doing the work of bishop, or overseer." And in the passage already alluded to (Acts xx. 15–28) those who at first are called elders are subsequently named bishops: "The Holy Ghost hath made you bishops to feed the Church of God" (R.V.). As the Church grew certain places would become prominent as centres of Christian life, and to the elders therein the oversight of other Churches would be given; and thus the overseer or bishop would grow to be distinct from the other presbyters, and his title be assigned to the more important office. This had not come about when St. Peter wrote.

The humility, which he is soon about to commend to the whole body, the Apostle manifests by placing

himself on the level of those to whom he speaks: "I, who am a fellow-elder, exhort you." He has strong claims to be heard, claims which can never be theirs. He has been a witness of the sufferings of Christ. He might have made mention of his apostleship; he might have told of the thrice-repeated commission which soon supplies the matter of his exhortation. He will rather be counted an equal, a fellow-labourer with themselves. Some have thought that even when he calls himself a witness of Christ's sufferings he is not so much referring to what he saw of the life and death of Jesus, as to the testimony which he has borne to his Master since the pentecostal outpouring and the share which he has had of sufferings for Christ's sake. If this be so, he would here too be reckoning himself even as they, as he clearly intends to do in the words which follow, where he calls himself a sharer, as they all are, in the glory to which they look forward. Thus in all things they are his brethren: in the ministry, in their affliction, and in their hope of glory to be revealed.

He opens his solemn charge with words which are the echo of Christ's own: "Feed My sheep"; "Feed My lambs." Every word pictures the responsibility of those to whom the trust is committed. These brethren are God's flock. Psalmists and prophets had been guided of old to use the figure; they speak of God's people as "the sheep of His pasture." But our Lord consecrated it still more when He called Himself "the good Shepherd, that giveth His life for the sheep." The word tells much of the character of those to whom it is applied. How prone they are to wander and stray, how helpless, how ill furnished with means of defence against perils. It tells, too, that they are easy to be led. But that is not all a blessing, for though

docile, they are often heedless, ready to follow any leader without thought of consequences.

But they are God's flock. This adds to the dignity of the elder's office, but adds also to the gravity of the trust, a trust to be entered on with fear and trembling. For the flock is precious to Christ, and should be precious to His shepherds. To let them perish for want of tending is treachery to the Master who has sent men to His work. And how much that tending means. To feed them is not all, though that is much. To provide such nurture as will help their growth in grace. There is a food store in God's word, but not every lesson there suits every several need. There must be thoughtful choice of lessons. The elders of old were, and God's shepherds now are, called to give much care how they minister, lest by their oversight or neglect—

"The hungry sheep look up, but are not fed."

But tending speaks of watchfulness. The shepherd must yield his account when the chief Shepherd shall appear. Those who are watchmen over God's flock must have an eye to quarters whence dangers may come, must mark the signs of them and be ready with safeguards. And the sheep themselves must be strengthened to endure and conquer when they are assailed; they cannot be kept out of harm's way always. Christ did not pray for His own little flock of disciples that they should be taken out of the world, only kept from the evil. Then all that betokens good must be cherished among them. For even tiny germs of goodness the Spirit will sanctify, and help the watchful elder, by his tending, to rear till they flourish and abound.

To his general precept St. Peter adds three defining

clauses, which tell us how the elder's duty may be rightly discharged, and against what perils and temptations he will need to strive: *exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God.* How would the oversight of an elder come to be exercised of constraint in the time of St. Peter? Those to whom he writes had been appointed to their office by apostolic authority, it may have been by St. Paul himself; and while an Apostle was present to inspire them enthusiasm for the new teaching would be at its height: many would be drawn to the service of Christ who would appear to the missionaries well fitted to be entrusted with such solemn charge and ministry. But even an Apostle cannot read men's hearts, and it was when the Apostles departed that the Churches would enter on their trial. Then the fitness of the elders would be put to the test. Could they maintain in the Churches the earnestness which had been awakened? Could they in their daily walk sustain the apostolic character, and help forward the cause both by word and life? Christianity would be unlike every other movement whose officers are human if there were not many failures and much weakness here and there; and if the ministrations of elders grew less accepted and less fruitful, they would be offered with ever-diminishing earnestness, and the services, full of life at the outset, would prove irksome from disappointment, and in the end be discharged only as a work of necessity.

And every subsequent age of the Church has endorsed the wisdom of St. Paul's caution, "Lay hands hastily on no man." Fervid zeal may grow cool, and inaptitude for the work become apparent. Nor are those in whom it is found always solely responsible

for a mistaken vocation. As St. Paul's words should make those vigilant whose office it is to send forth men to sacred ministries, so St. Peter's warning should check any undue urging of men to offer themselves. It is a sight to move men to sorrow, and God to displeasure, when the shepherd's work is perfunctory, not done willingly, according to God.

In some texts the last three words are not represented, nor are they found in our Authorised Version. But they have abundant authority, and so fully declare the spirit in which all pastoral work should be done that they might well be repeated emphatically with each of these three clauses. To labour *according to God*, "as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye," is so needful that the words may be commended to the elders as a constant motto. And not only as in His sight should the work be done, but with an endeavour after the standard which is set before us in Christ. We are to stoop as He stooped that we may raise those who cannot raise themselves; to be compassionate to the penitent, breaking no bruised reed, quenching no spark in the smoking flax. The pastor's words should be St. Paul's, "We are your servants for Jesus's sake," his action that of the shepherd in the parable: "When he findeth it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing." Such joy comes only to willing workers.

Nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. We do not usually think of the Church in the apostolic age as offering any temptation to the covetous. The disciples were poor men, and there is little trace of riches in the opening chapters of the Acts. St. Paul, too, constantly declined to be a burden to the flock, as though he felt it right to spare the brethren. The lessons of the New Testament on this subject are very plain. When our

Lord sent forth His seventy disciples, He sent them as "labourers worthy of their hire" (Luke x. 7); and St. Paul declares it to be the Lord's ordinance that they which proclaim the Gospel should live of the Gospel (1 Cor. ix. 14). To serve with a ready mind is to seek nothing beyond this. But it is clear both from St. Paul's language (1 Tim. iii. 3; Titus i. 7) and from this verse that there existed temptations to greed, and that some were overcome thereby. It is worthy of note, however, that those who are given up to this covetousness are constantly branded with false teaching. They are thus described by both the Apostles. They teach things which they ought not (Titus i. 11), and with feigned words make merchandise of the flock (2 Peter ii. 3). The spirit of self-seeking and base gain (which is the literal sense of St. Peter's word) is so alien to the spirit of the Gospel that we cannot conceive a faithful and true shepherd using other language than that of St. Paul: "We seek not yours, but you."

Neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. This, too, is a special peril at all times for those who are called to preside in spiritual offices. The interests committed to their trust are so surpassingly momentous that they must often speak with authority, and the Church's history furnishes examples of men who would make themselves lords where Christ alone should be Lord. Against this temptation He has supplied the safeguard for all who will use it. "My sheep," He says, "hear My voice." And the faithful tenders of His flock must ever ask themselves in their service, Is this the voice of Christ? The question will be in their hearts as they give counsel to those who need and seek it, What would Christ have said to this man or to that?

The same sort of question will bring to the test their public ministrations, and will make that most prominent in them which He intended to be so. Thus will be introduced into all they do a due proportion and subordination, and many a subject of disquiet in the Churches will thereby sink almost into insignificance. At the same time the constant reference to their own Lord will keep them in mind that they are His servants for the flock of God.

While he warns the elders against the assumption of lordship over their charges, the Apostle adds a precept which, if it be followed, will abate all tendency to seek such lordship. For it brings to the mind of those set over the flock that they too are but sheep, like the rest, and are appointed not to dominate, but to help their brethren. *Making yourselves ensamples to the flock.* Christ's rule for the good shepherd is, "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him" (John x. 4). The weak take in teaching rather from what they see than from what they hear. The teacher must be a living witness to the word, a proof of its truth and power. If he be not this, all his teaching is of little value. The simplest teacher who lives out his lessons in his life becomes a mighty power; he gains the true, the lawful lordship, and—

"Truth from his lips prevails with double sway."

The Apostles knew well the weight and influence of holy examples. Hence St. Paul appeals continually to the lives of himself and his fellow-workers. We labour, he says, "to make ourselves an ensample unto you that ye should imitate us" (2 Thess. iii. 9); Timothy he exhorts, "Be thou an ensample to them that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 12), and Titus, "In all things

showing thyself an ensample of good works" (Titus ii. 7). Nothing can withstand the eloquence of him who can dare to appeal to his brethren, as the Apostle does, "Be ye imitators together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Phil. iii. 7), and "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 1). Such pattern shepherds have been the admiration of every age. Chaucer, among his pilgrims, describes the good parson thus :—

> "The lore of Christ and His Apostles twelve
> He taught, and first he followed it himself."

Such are the lives of shepherds who remember that they are even as their flocks: frail and full of evil tendencies, and needing to come continually, in humble supplication, to the source of strength and light, and to be ever watchful over their own lives. These men seek no lordship; there comes to them a nobler power, and the allegiance they win is self-tendered.

And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. For their consolation the Apostle sets before the elders their Judge in His self-chosen character. He is the chief Shepherd. Judge He must also be when He is manifested; but while He must pass sentence on their work, He will understand and weigh the many hindrances, both within and without, against which they have had to fight. Of human weakness, error, sin, such as besets us, He had no share; but He knows whereof we are made, and will not ask from any of us a service beyond our powers. Nay, His Spirit chooses for us, would we but mark it, the work in which we can serve Him most fitly. And He has borne the contradiction of sinners against Himself. In judging

His servants, then, He will take account of the wilfulness of ears that would not hear and of eyes that would not see, of the waywardness that chose darkness rather than light, ignorance rather than Divine knowledge, death rather than life.

Therefore His feeble but faithful servants may with humble minds welcome His appearing. He comes as Judge. *Ye shall receive.* It is a word descriptive of the Divine award at the last. Here it marks the bestowal of a reward, but elsewhere (2 Peter ii. 13) the Apostle uses it for the payment to sinners of the hire of wrong-doing. But the Judge is full of mercy. Of one sinner's feeble efforts He said, "She hath done what she could. Her sins are forgiven." And another who had laboured to be faithful He welcomed to His presence: "Enter into the joy of thy Lord." To share that joy, to partake of His glory, to be made like Him by beholding His presence—this will be the faithful servant's prize, a crown of amaranth, unwithering, eternal.

XVII

BE CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY

XVII

BE CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY

"Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you."—1 PETER v. 5–7.

HAVING admonished the shepherds, the Apostle now turns to the flock, and his words recall the exhortations which he has given several times before. In ii. 13 he taught Christian subjects the duty of submission, even should it be their lot to live under heathen rulers. A few verses further on in the same chapter he repeated this teaching to Christian slaves with heathen masters, and the third chapter opens with advice of the same character to the wives who were married to heathen husbands. And now once more, with his favourite verb "be subject," he opens his counsel to the Churches on their duty to those set over them. The relation between the elders and their flock will not be as strained, or not strained after the same manner, as between Christians and heathens in the other cases, but the same principle is to govern the behaviour of those who hold the subject position. The duly appointed teachers are to be accepted as powers ordained of God, and their rule and guidance followed with submission.

Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. He teaches that as there is a duty of the elders to the younger, so there is a reciprocal duty which, in like manner and with the same thoroughness, must be discharged by the younger to the elders. In those early days the congregation could fitly be spoken of as "the younger." Naturally the teachers would be chosen from those who had been the first converts. The rest of the body would consist not only of those younger in years, but younger in the acceptance of the faith, younger in the knowledge of the doctrines of Christ, younger in Christian experience. And if the Churches were to be a power among their heathen surroundings, it must be by their unity in spirit and faith; and this could only be secured by a loyal and ready following of those who were chosen to instruct them.

But lest there may be any undue straining of the claim to submission, there follows immediately a precept to make it general: *Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another.* Thus will be realised the true idea of the Christian body, where each member should help all, and be helped of all, the rest, eye and hand, head and feet, each having their office, and each ministering therein as parts of the one body. This idea of general humility was altogether unknown to the world before Christ's coming. The word, therefore, is one coined for Christian use: lowliness of mind, a frame wherein each deems others better than himself. And with it the Apostle has coupled another word for "gird yourselves," which is well fitted to be so placed. It is found nowhere else, and is full of that graphic character of which he is so fond. The noun from which it is derived signifies "an outer garment," mainly used by household servants and slaves, to cover their

other clothing and keep it from being spoiled. It appears to have been bound round the waist by a girdle. The word is a complete picture. St. Peter sees in humility a robe which shall encompass the whole life of the believer, keeping off all that might sully or defile it; and into the sense of the word comes the lowly estate of those by whom the garment in question was worn. It was connected entirely with the humblest duties. Hence its appropriateness when joined with "serve one another."

And one cannot in studying this striking word of the Apostle but be carried in thought to that scene described by St. John where Jesus "took a towel and girded Himself" (John xiii. 4) to wash the feet of His disciples. St. Peter gained much instruction from that washing, and he has not forgotten the lesson when he desires to confirm the brethren in Christian humility. "I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you," was the Lord's injunction; and this the Apostle delivers to the Churches. And verily Christ spake of Himself more truly than of any other when He described the master's treatment of his watchful servants: "He shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them" (Luke xii. 37). Such has been the Lord's humiliation, who took upon Him our flesh, and now bids us to His banquet, where, through His Spirit, He is ever waiting to bless those who draw near.

How this exhortation to humility in dealing with one another is connected with the verse (Prov. iii. 34) by which the Apostle supports it does not perhaps immediately appear. *For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* But a little reflection on the characteristics of pride towards men soon makes

us conscious that it is very closely united with pride towards God. The Pharisee who despises the publican, and thanks God in words that he is not such a one, feels in his heart no thankfulness nor care for God at all. His own acts have made him the pattern of goodness which he conceives himself to be. And we discover the like in every other exhibition of this spirit. The term (*ὑπερήφανοι*) by which these haughty ones are described indicates a desire to be conspicuous, to stand apart from and above their fellows. They are self-centred, and look down upon the rest of the world, and forget their dependence upon God.

St. Peter in his quotation has followed the Septuagint. In the Hebrew the first half of the verse is, "He scorneth the scorners." And this is the manner of God's dealing. He pays men with their own coin. Jacob's deceit was punished in kind by the frequent deceptions of his children, so that at last he could hardly credit their report that Joseph is still alive. David was scourged for his offences exactly according to his own sin. But the word which the Apostle has drawn from the Septuagint is also of solemn import. It declares a state of war between God and man. God *resisteth* the proud; literally, He setteth Himself in array against them. And their overthrow is sure. They that strive with the Lord shall be broken to pieces. The Psalmist rejoices over the contrary lot: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do unto me?" (Psalm cxviii. 6). He had realised the feebleness of human strength, even for man to rely on, much more if it stand in opposition to God. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man," be it in ourselves or in others. So out of his distress he called upon the Lord. It is the sense of need which

makes men humble; and to humbled souls God's blessing comes: "He answered me, and set me in a large place."

And as though He would mark humility as the chief grace to prepare men for His kingdom, the Lord's first words in His sermon on the mount are a blessing on the lowly-minded: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—not shall be, but *is* theirs even now. God's favour to the humble is a present gift. How the sense of this swells the thanksgivings of Hannah and the Virgin Mary! And to teach the lesson to His disciples, when they were far from humility and were anxious only to know which of them should be above the rest in what they still dreamt of as an earthly kingdom, He took a little child and set him before them, as the pattern to which His true followers must conform. This childlike virtue gives admission to the kingdom of heaven; its possessors have the kingdom of God within them.

And St. Peter feeds the flock as he himself was fed. *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.* The Apostle may be referring in these words to the trials which were upon the converts when he wrote to them. These he would have them look upon as God's discipline, as a cause for joy rather than sorrow. Christian humility will not rebel against fatherly, merciful correction. How the good man bows before the hand of God we see in Moses when God refused to let him go over into Canaan: "I besought the Lord, saying, O Lord God, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness and Thy strong hand. . . . Let me go over, I pray Thee, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and hearkened

not unto me" (Deut. iii. 23). And so the meek prophet, who knew that his withdrawal was for the people's sake, having sung, "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord?" (Deut. xxxiii. 29), went up unto Mount Nebo and died there, when his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. Hence his praise: "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." Humility was his dying lesson.

But as the Apostle has just been speaking of the duty owed to the elders as teachers, it is perhaps better to apply the words of the exhortation in that sense. Those who were set over the Churches were so set in the Lord. For the time they represented His hand, the hand of care and guidance to those who were submissive. In honouring them, the younger were honouring God. Thus the lesson would be, Bend your hearts to the instruction which He imparts through their words; yield your will to His will, and order your life to be in harmony with His providence; live thus that He may exalt you. For the hand which may seem heavy now will be mighty to raise you in due time. And that time He knows. It is His time, not yours. If it tarry, wait for it. It will surely come; it will not tarry, when the Divine discipline has done its work.

Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you. When men do this the due time has come. Till this stage is reached there can be no true humility. But how slow men are in reaching it! We are willing to bring to God a little here and there of our sorrow and our feebleness, but would fain still carry a part of the load ourselves. Human pride it is which cannot stoop to owe everything to God; want of faith, too, both in the Divine power and the Divine love, though

our tongues may not confess it. What a powerful homily on this verse is the conduct of the youthful David when he went forth against the Philistine! "The Lord," he says to Saul, "that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." And when the king offered his own coat of mail, though tempted thereby, he put the armour away, saying, "I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them." He knew that God had given him skill with the humbler weapons, and it was God's battle in which he was to engage. So with his stones and his sling he went forth, telling the defiant challenger, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts." The action is a comment on the Psalmist's words, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm xxxviii. 5).

But neither the young hero by his example, nor the Apostle in his exhortation, teaches a spirit of careless indifference and neglect of means. David chose him five smooth stones out of the brook. These he could use. With these God had delivered him aforetime. And in every condition men are bound to use the best means they know to ensure success, and the Christian will pour out his prayers for guidance and foresight in temporal concerns. That done, the counsel of Christ, on which St. Peter's exhortation is grounded, is, "Be not overanxious; your heavenly Father knoweth your needs." And he who has grown humble under the mighty hand of God in trials has learnt that the same hand is mighty to save: "He careth for you." When this perfect trust is placed in God, the load is lifted. It is, as the Psalmist says literally, *rolled* upon the Lord (Psalm xxxviii. 5).

How salutary this teaching for both the elders and the congregations among these Christians of the dispersion, and how full the promise of help and blessing. The teachers had been placed in the midst of difficulties and charged with a mighty responsibility; but robed in the garment of humility, casting aside all self-trust, coming only in the name of the Lord, the burden would be raised by the almighty arms and made convenient to their powers. And to the younger the same lowly spirit, loving thoughts toward those who cared for their souls, would be fruitful in blessing. For the same God who resisteth the proud showers His grace upon the humble. It falls on them as the dew of Hermon, which cometh down upon the mountains of Zion. Unto them Christ has proclaimed His foremost blessing; has promised, and is giving, the kingdom of heaven to humble souls, and will give them life for evermore.

XVIII

THROUGH PERILS TO VICTORY

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"Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world. And the God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you. To Him *be* the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

"By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account *him*, I have written unto you briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein. She that is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, saluteth you; and *so doth* Mark my son. Salute one another with a kiss of love.

"Peace be unto you all that are in Christ."—I PETER v. 8–14.

NOT only had these Asian Christians to suffer from the opposition and calumnies of the heathen and from the estrangement of former friends: there were perils within the Churches themselves. There were weak brethren, who fell away when trials came, and infected others with their despondency; there were false brethren, with whom faith was a mere consent of the understanding, and not the spring of a holy, spiritual life. These spake of the liberty of Christ as though it were an emancipation from all moral restraints. Such dangers asked for firmness both in the elders and their hearers. To withstand them there must be a constant growth in Christian experience,

whereby the faithful might wax steadfast, and attain to the strength and stature of the fulness of Christ. These dangers became more manifest before St. Peter wrote his second letter, where we find them described in dark colours.

Here to the converts, exposed to the assaults of these temptations, he enjoins the same well-ordered frame of mind which before (i. 13) he commended to them as they looked forward to the hope in store for them, and also (iv. 7) in their prayers, that their petitions might be such as suited with the approaching end of all things. *Be sober*, he says again, and combines therewith an exhortation which without sobriety is impossible: *Be watchful.* If the mind be unbalanced, there can be no keeping of a true guard against such dangers as were around these struggling believers. And it is impossible not to connect such an exhortation from his lips with those words of Christ, which one Evangelist says were expressly addressed to St. Peter, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Mark xiv. 37, 38). He who had received this admonition was conscious that, as in his own case, so with these his converts, the spirit might be willing, but the flesh was weak, and the enemy mighty.

Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. In the days of Job, when God asked of Satan, "Whence comest thou?" his answer was, "From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it" (Job i. 7). Of this Old Testament language the Apostle here makes partial use in his description of the enemy of mankind. He walketh about in the earth, which is his province, for he is called the prince of this world (John xii. 31) and the god of this world (2 Cor. iv. 4). And the Greek

word *ἀντίδικος*, "adversary," which St. Peter uses as a translation of the Hebrew "Satan," is well chosen, for it describes not an ordinary enemy, but one who acts as an opponent would in a court of law. Such was Satan from the first, an accuser. In Job's case he accused the Patriarch to his God: "Doth Job serve God for nought?" "Put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, or touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." In earlier days he appears as the accuser of God Himself: "Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii. 4, 5). And with such-like suggestions he assails the faithful continually, speaking either to their unguarded hearts, or by the words of his servants, of whom he has no lack. St. Paul dreaded his power for the Thessalonian converts: "I sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labour should be in vain" (1 Thess. iii. 5). And St. Peter's words are dictated by the same fear; he has the same wish to keep the flock steadfast in their faith. To them Satan's whisperings would be after this sort: "You are forgotten of God"; "Love could never leave you so long in trial." Or his agents would say in scorn, "How can you talk of freedom, when your life is one long torment? What is the profit of faith, when it gives you no liberty?" And such questions are perilous to feeble minds. The Apostle marks the great danger by a comparison which Ezekiel (xxii. 25) had used before him, speaking of the tempter as a roaring lion, ever hungry for his prey. There is but one weapon which can vanquish him. "This is the victory that

hath overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4). St. Peter's lesson is the same as St. John's.

Whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world. The steadfast faith must be the firm foundation of God; and the same thoughts, which St. Paul commends as a correction of those who have erred concerning the truth, are those most fit to be urged upon St. Peter's converts to render them steadfast. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19), and with the Lord to know is to care for and to save. And "let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." This is the perfect law, the law of true liberty, and he who continueth therein, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, shall be blessed in his doing. Thus resting on God and thus ruling himself, he shall be kept from the snares of the enemy, and having withstood in the evil day, shall still be made able to stand.

And to such steadfastness the brethren are to be moved by the knowledge that others are in the same affliction. How shall such knowledge minister support? The mere knowledge that others bear a like burden does not strengthen our own shoulders; to hear of others' pains will not relieve our own. Not so. But just as it is a power in warfare when men see their leader before them, facing the same perils, hear his voice cheering them by his courage, inspiring them with his hope; just as it is a support to brave men to find brave brethren at their side in the conflict, animated by the same spirit, marching forward to the same victory, so is it in the Christian struggle. All Christians are to be steadfast, the elders like the leaders of

an army, the younger like the soldiers who follow, that, moving with one spirit against the foe, feeling that each is like-minded with all the rest, while all are equally conscious of the importance of victory, they may grasp hands as they go forward, and be heartened thereby, being sure that in the danger they will have helpers at their side.

And that he may give the more emphasis to this idea of unity, in which, though the suffering is common to all, yet the hope is also common, and the victory is promised to all, the Apostle does not speak of the converts as a multitude of brethren, but uses a noun in the singular number, naming them (as the margin of the Revised Version indicates) "a brotherhood" (ἀδελφότης). And when they regarded themselves as "a brotherhood in the world," the thought would have its comforting as well as its painful aspect. The world, as Scripture speaks of it, is void of faith. Hence the believer, while he lives in it, is amid jarring surroundings, and is sure to suffer. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But it is not to last for ever, nor for long. "The world passeth away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." And though the brotherhood in the world must suffer, yet there is that other brotherhood beyond; and there the suffering will not be remembered for the glory that shall be revealed in us.

And the God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you. Being now about to sum up the great work of Christian advancement, in which from first to last the power is bestowed by God, St. Peter finds no title more fitting to express the Divine love than "the God of *all* grace.

The invitation to become partakers of the glory which Christ has won by His sufferings, won that He may bestow it upon men, was God's free call. Our sufferings, the discipline which the Father employs to purge and purify us, are to last but a little while. Then those whom He has called He will also justify, and those whom He justifies He will in the end glorify. Thus St. Paul (Rom. viii. 30) describes the operations of Divine grace. St. Peter, with the same lesson, uses words more after his own graphic manner. He gives us a picture of God's work in its several stages. First God will complete in all its parts the work which He has begun. He will make it so that He can pronounce it very good, as He did when the worlds *were perfected* in the first creation (Heb. xi. 3), making His people to be so *perfected* that they may be as their Master (Luke vi. 40). Then He will sustain and support that which He has brought to its best estate. There shall not be, as in the first creation, any falling away. New gifts shall be bestowed by the Holy Spirit, through the ministration of the word. It was for such a purpose that St. Paul longed to visit the Roman Church, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, to the end that they might be *established.* And what has been perfected and established shall also by the same grace be made strong, that it may endure and withstand all assaults.

In many ancient texts a fourth verb is given, which the Authorised Version renders "settle." It signifies "to set on a firm foundation," and it is of the figurative character which marks St. Peter's language, and, beside this, is not uncommon in the New Testament (Matt. vii. 25; Luke vi. 48; Heb. i. 10, etc.). But the verbs immediately preceding have no direct reference to a

building, and the addition arises probably from a marginal note, made to illustrate the text and by some later scribe incorporated with it. The whole passage brings to mind Christ's injunction to the Apostle, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. A fitting doxology to follow the Apostle's enumeration of the riches of Divine grace. He who feels that every gift he has is from above will with ready thankfulness welcome God's rule, and seek to submit himself thereto, making it the law of his life here, as he hopes it will be hereafter.

By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you briefly. Silvanus was that Silas who accompanied St. Paul in his second missionary journey through the districts of Phrygia and Galatia (Acts xvi. 6), to which St. Peter addresses his letter. To send it by the hand of one known and esteemed among these Churches for his former labours and for his friendship with the great Apostle of the Gentiles would secure acceptance for it, while the bearer would testify to the unity of the doctrine preached by the two Apostles. He who had been a faithful brother to St. Paul was so also to St. Peter, and was by him commended to the Churches. For the expression, *I account him,* implies no doubt or question in the Apostle's own mind. It is the utterance of a matured opinion. The verb (λογίζομαι) is that which St. Paul uses: "I *reckon* that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18). To St. Paul something of the future glory had been shown, and he had felt abundance of present suffering. He had taken account of both sides, and could speak with certainty.

The brevity of St. Peter's letter could be supplemented by the words of his messenger. For Silas himself was a prophet (Acts xv. 32), and fitted to exhort and confirm the brethren.

Exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein. The grace in its several stages has just been summarised: the calling, the perfecting, stablishing, strengthening; and the whole letter is occupied in showing that at every advance God puts His servants to the test. But the Apostle knows that the agents of the adversary are busily scattering the tares of doubt and disbelief where God had sown His good seed. The wrestling is not against flesh and blood alone, but against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual host of wickedness. Hence the form of his exhortation: *Stand fast.*

She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark my son. Salute one another with a kiss of love. It is most natural to refer these words to a Church, and not to any individual. Some have interpreted them as an allusion to St. Peter's wife, whom, as we know from St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 5), he sometimes had as a companion in his travels. But there is a degree of inappropriateness in speaking of a single person as elect along with these various Churches of Asia, whereas the Church in Babylon might fitly have such a distinction. It is unnecessary, too, to explain Babylon (as some have done) as intended for Rome. There was no conceivable reason in St. Peter's day why, when he was writing to lands under Roman dominion, if he meant to speak of the city in Italy, he should not call it by its real name. The Mark here named was most probably the John whose surname was Mark (Acts xii. 12), whose mother

was a friend of St. Peter's from the earliest days of his apostolic labours. He, too, had been a companion of St. Paul for a time, and made another link between the two great Apostles. St. Peter calls him "son" because it is likely that both the mother and her son were won to the new teaching by him, and he employs the term of affection just as St. Paul does of Timothy, his convert (1 Tim. i. 2, 18; 2 Tim. i. 2). The salutation by a kiss is frequently mentioned. It is called "a holy kiss" (Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 26) in St. Paul's language. We find from Justin Martyr[1] that it had come to be used in his day as part of the ceremonial preceding the Holy Communion. It was to be a token of perfect love, according to the name which St. Peter here gives it. An evil construction was soon put upon it by the enemies of the faith; and after a long history it fell into disuse, even in the East, where such manner of salutation is more common than in the West. In his final words the Apostle has embodied the benediction of which the kiss was meant to be the symbol.

Peace be unto you all that are in Christ. This is the bond which unites believers into one fellowship. To be in Christ is to be of the brotherhood which has been so significantly marked just before for its unity. And in these last clauses we have examples of the force of the tie. Individuals are brought by it into close communion, as Peter himself with Silas and with Mark, whom he speaks of in terms of family love. To the Churches Silas is commended as a brother in the faith, which faith establishes a bond of strength between the distant Churches which have been called into it

[1] *Apol.* i. 65.

together. Well might the heathen, wonderstruck, exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another!" And the Apostle's own words mark the all-embracing character of the love: *all that are in Christ.* They are all brethren, children of the common Father, inheritors of the same promises, pilgrims on the same journey, sustained by the same hope, servants of the same Lord, and strengthened, guided, and enlightened by the one Spirit, who is promised to abide with Christ's Church for ever.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

XIX

THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

XIX

THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

"Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His Divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue; whereby He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust."—2 PETER i. 1–4.

IN the salutation of this second letter the Apostle describes himself in fuller form than in the first: *Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.* Some have seen in this description a testamentary character, as though the Epistle contained his parting counsels. The words form an epitome of his whole life. As Simon, son of Jonas, he lived his life in Judaism until Christ's call summoned him to be a fisher of men. "Peter" is the Christ-given name, which marked an advance in spiritual illumination, an advance that fitted him to be one of the chief heralds of God manifest in the flesh. As a servant (or rather, bondservant) of Jesus Christ, he stands on the same level with those to whom he writes, though the service to which he has been called may be in character different from theirs. Jesus had said to the twelve, and through them to the

whole body of believers, "One is your Master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. xxiii. 10). And here comes forward that other aspect of Christian service. The servants of Christ are, for His sake, servants to all the brotherhood (2 Cor. iv. 5). As an apostle he speaks with authority, an authority greater than can be possessed by any future age. The solemn character of the office is stamped by Christ's words, "As My Father sent Me, even so send I you"; and the Churches are reminded, as they think of the apostolic office, that the Lord who commissioned the twelve to be His servants said, "He that heareth you heareth Me, and He that despiseth you despiseth Me."

St. Peter does not, as in his former letter, name the Churches to which he is writing; but afterwards (iii. 1) he states that this is his second letter to them. We may therefore conclude that the same persons are addressed as before. Here he speaks of them as *them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.* Some have thought that here the Apostle's words are specially addressed to those among the converts who had been won from heathendom, and now were made partakers of the same faith with himself and others who, like him, had been born Jews, and so heirs in part to God's precious promises. But, as he has just made mention of his apostolic office, it seems easier to refer "us" to the Apostles. If this be the sense, then—though in the allusion to his office and authority they must have recognised the points wherein his communing with Christ had made him to differ from them—these words set forward that aspect of the Christian life wherein all the faithful are equal. The graces, gifts, and

opportunities which God bestows are according to men's power to improve them; but faith, in its saving efficacy and preciousness, is the same for every believer. And when he speaks of this faith as being in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, we see that he is thinking of righteousness in that sense in which he uses the word afterwards in this Epistle (iii. 13): as that perfect righteousness which belongs to the new heavens and the new earth, and hence to God Himself.

To this righteousness each "stranger and sojourner" in the world is striving to attain by faith, and by each exercise thereof he is raised nearer to his lofty aim. His faith, like the patriarch's of old, is counted unto him for righteousness. The fruit of each man's faith will be ἰσότιμος—"alike precious"—when the journey is ended. For it will be salvation in the presence of the perfect righteousness. As in the Saviour's parable the welcome was the same to him who had rightly used his two talents as to him who had done the like with five, so each faithful servant of Christ, working righteousness according to his power here, shall be called up into the joy of his Lord. For the joys of heaven all will not have the same capacity; but for each, according to his power to receive it, there will be fulness of joy. Nor should the word "obtained" pass unnoticed. It is the word used of Judas (Acts i. 17), who *obtained* part of the apostolic ministry on the call of Jesus. So here, too, the call into the faith is of God; and it is when men obey it that they progress in Divine graces and go forward unto righteousness.

Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. The first words are the same with the Apostle's prayer in the opening of the

First Epistle. And to no stage of the Christian life can such a wish be inappropriate. To grow in grace, and so in peace, is the Christian's daily bread; and the thought of this seems to be uppermost in St. Peter's mind in this letter, that thus the falling away, to which he sees the converts are likely to be exposed, may be counteracted. The danger was arising from the boastful parade of a knowledge (γνῶσις) falsely so called (1 Tim. vi. 20). Before this letter was written teachers had risen within the Church who professed to have a deeper and more mysterious interpretation of the doctrines of the Gospel. This esoteric enlightenment they specially named "knowledge," and led men astray by profitless inquiries concerning the absolute nature of God and the manner of His communication with the world. To this teaching St. Paul is referring when he speaks of "foolish questions" and "endless genealogies," and it is this which St. Peter rebukes so vehemently in the next chapter of this letter. As an antidote for the poison, he urges the converts to seek after a true and full knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) of the Father and the Son. No single word can adequately represent this term, which became the watchword of all the Christian teachers. It is that knowledge of the truth which St. Paul so often commends to Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 7) and speaks of as that acknowledging of the truth, allowing it to be effective on the life, which follows repentance (2 Tim. ii. 25); it is specially the knowledge of God and of things Divine; it is that knowledge which must temper religious zeal (Rom. x. 2) that it may be effective; it is the knowledge against which if a man sin (Heb. x. 26) he is verily reprobate. And this true knowledge can only come of faithful service. He shall know the Lord who loves to do

His will. Do the works, and ye shall know of the doctrine.

Seeing that His Divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. The work, though great, becomes not impossible ; the dangers and difficulties, though abundant, are not insurmountable. For it is not on us that the victory depends. God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope through Christ's resurrection ; and Christ has promised to be with His servants all the days, even unto the end of the world. There is a free gift of Divine power for all our needs, everything to foster the spiritual life and to guide into the way of holiness. Wisdom will be given that we may understand God's will and choose aright, strength to persevere in the midst of trial, boldness to make confession of the Lord before men, and watchfulness lest we, as did the teachers of error, wax overconfident. All things are granted ; all things may be ours.

Through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue. Here the same full knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) of which the Apostle has just been speaking is to become the channel of all our blessings : to know God, who has made Himself to be known through Christ Jesus. God's glory and virtue—that is, His Divine power—have been manifested in Him. The disciples beheld them in Christ's miracles. "This beginning of His signs did Jesus, . . . and manifested His glory ; and His disciples believed on Him" (John ii. 11), and of His whole life St. John says, "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father. He dwelt among us full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). This is what St. Peter means by "virtue." And still in the hearts of men through the Spirit the same manifestation is given. He illumines them, to

give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Whereby He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises. In Christ God has offered men all the blessings of the new covenant: repentance; faith; justification; eternal life. He, with the Son and the Spirit, comes unto the faithful and makes His abode with them. Thus they are made members of Christ's mystical body. He dwells in their hearts by faith; He gives them power to become sons of God: they are adopted of God, who sent His only-begotten Son into the world that they might live through Him. These are the precious promises granted, but not forced upon men, set forth in all their greatness in the life and love of Jesus; and men are invited to choose them. And the choice is made by patiently doing the will of God so far as it is revealed to each man; after that we shall receive the promises (Heb. x. 36).

That through these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature. This is the Divine scheme for man's restoration; this is the change of which St. Paul speaks to the Corinthians (2 Cor. ii. 18), and which he illustrates by the glorified face of Moses. The prophet was called up into Mount Horeb, and drew near to the presence of Jehovah; the Lord spake with him face to face out of the midst of the fire, and his countenance was illumined by the eternal glory. But the radiance was bestowed on Moses alone; the people might not draw near: and the glory shed on him was transient, so that he veiled his face lest the people should mark its passing away. But since the manifestation of God in Christ all men may draw near, and be made partakers of unfading glory. It is not with Zion as with Sinai. The way is open to all, nor

will the glory pass away from those who have been blessed with it. For now we all, with unveiled face, reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord, and, with progress in holiness, are transformed into the same image, as from the Lord the Spirit. Thus men *become*—for it is a gradual process—partakers of the Divine nature, and being drawn more near to God while they live here, are fitted through His mercy, when the last call comes, to go up higher and sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, their life having been a constant putting on of the wedding garment.

Having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. This is the victory that overcometh the world, but it is a conquest which men cannot win unaided, nay, where the truest bravery, the surest hope, is in speedy flight. Like Lot from Sodom must the Christian hasten away from the lusts of the world, casting no look behind him, nor tarrying to dally with them for a moment. For the flesh is weak, and the prince of this world is mighty in his evil domain, and, that he may lead men astray, will ofttimes transform himself into an angel of light; and within the soul of man he has his confederate powers, the cravings of this human nature, which thinks the baits of the enemy are pleasant to the eyes, and it may be they look fit to make one wise. And so in the eyes of the tempted ones, as in the eyes of the senseless bird of the Proverbs, the net seems spread in vain; in their own fancy they seem able to go on without being entangled, and Satan encourages the delusion. After that the stages are easy, but they are all down hill. Men first walk after their own lusts; then they are led by them, then obey them, and at last become their slaves. This is the corruption, the ruin, from which the Christian is aided to flee through

seeking the glory of God as it is set before him in the Saviour's works and words. Drawn by these, he turns away his gaze from the world and its lusts; his eyes no longer behold vanity to love it. He has begun to learn of Jesus, and every new lesson makes him stronger in the faith; and by degrees he is enabled to bring forth into light, and bear witness to, the knowledge which he has gained of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. So not he alone, but those who behold his escape and mark his growth in grace, may give God the praise, saying, "This hath God wrought," for they shall perceive that it is His work.

XX

WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO THE HILL OF THE LORD?

XX

WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO THE HILL OF THE LORD?

"Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in *your* virtue knowledge; and in *your* knowledge temperance; and in *your* temperance patience; and in *your* patience godliness; and in *your* godliness love of the brethren; and in *your* love of the brethren love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 PETER i. 5–11.

THE Apostle has just set forth in all their fulness the riches of Divine grace: the precious faith, followed by the bestowal of all helps toward life and godliness, and with the large promises of God to rely on for the future, promises whereby those who seek to renounce the things which are not of the Father, but of the world, may become partakers of the Divine nature. These blessings are assured, are in store, but only for those who manifest a desire to receive them. How this desire shall be shown, how it shall constantly grow stronger and be ever fulfilling, until it attain perfect fruition in Christ's eternal kingdom, is the next instruction. *Yea, and for this very cause adding on*

your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue. The plenteousness of the Divine bounty is proclaimed that it may evoke an earnest response from all who receive it. What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits which He hath done, and is doing, unto me? is to be the heart's cry of the feeblest of God's saints. For the boundless ocean of grace asks that there should be mingled with it some drops of human duty. God will heal the bite of the serpents in the wilderness, but to gain the blessing the wounded ones, even in their suffering, must turn their eyes to the appointed symbol of healing. Christ's power will cure ten lepers, but He first sends them away to do their little in the path of obedience: "Go, show yourselves to the priest." Thus the Apostle's exhortation here, *Adding on your part all diligence.* The diligence of which he speaks is that sort of endeavour which springs from a sense of duty: an earnest zeal and will to accomplish whatever it finds to do; that does not linger till some great work offers, but hastens to labour in the immediate present. This is the spirit in which Christian advance will be made. And the lines on which such progress will go he now describes as though each new step were evolved from, and were a natural development of, that which preceded it. The faith which the Christian holds fast is the gift of God, and it contains the germs of every grace that can follow. These the believer is to foster with diligence.

St. Peter begins his scale of graces thus: *In your faith supply virtue.* Here virtue means the best development of such power as a man possesses. It may be little or great, but in its kind it is to be made excellent. And here it is that the Christian workers in every sphere must surpass others. They work from

a higher motive. What they do is a constant attestation of their faith, is done as in God's sight, and in the confidence that in every act it is possible to give Him glory. There can be no carelessness in such lives, for they are filled with a sense of responsibility, which is the first-fruit of a living faith. And in St. Peter's figurative word the believer is said to supply each grace in turn because he contributes by his careful walk to wake it into life, to make it active, and let it shine as a light before men. *And in your virtue knowledge*, he continues. For, with duty rightly done, there comes illumination over the path of life: men understand more of God's dealings, and hence bring their lives into closer harmony with His will. And we have Christ's own assurance, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (John vii. 17). And the same is true not only of the Lord's own lessons, but of all the promptings of the Spirit in men's hearts. If they hearken to the voice which whispers, "This is the way," it will become at every stage plainer, and there will be shown to them not only the how, but the wherefore.

And in your knowledge temperance. There is a knowledge which puffeth up, giving not humility, which is the fruit of true knowledge, but self-conceit. Of the evil effects thereof the Apostle knew much. Out of it grew extravagance in thought, and word, and action; and its mischief was threatening the infant Churches. Against it the temperance which he commends is to be the safeguard, and it is a virtue which can be manifested in all things. He who possesses it has conquered himself, and has won his way thus to stability of mind and consistency of conduct. "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord," and so he can go

forward to the Apostle's next stage of the heavenward journey: *And in your temperance patience.* This is the true sequence of spiritual self-control. Life is sure to supply for the godly man trials in abundance. But he is daily striving to die unto the world. The effort fixes his mind firmly on the Divine purposes, and lifts him above the circumstances of time. He is a pilgrim and sojourner amidst them, but is in no bondage to them, nor will he be moved, even by great afflictions, to waver in his trust. He can look on, as seeing Him that is invisible, and can persevere without being unduly cast down.

And in your patience godliness. The mystery of godliness—that is, Godlikeness—was made known by the Incarnation. The Son of God became man, that men might through Him be made sons of God. And godliness in the present world is Christ made manifest in the lives of His servants. Toward this imitation of Christ the believer will aspire through his patience. He takes up the cross and bears it after his Master, and thus begins his discipleship, of which the communion with Christ waxes more intimate day by day. Such was the godliness of St. Paul. It was because he had followed the Lord in all that He would have him to do that the Apostle was bold to exhort the Corinthians, "Be ye imitators of me"; but he adds at once, "as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 1). And when he sends Timothy to recall his teaching to their minds he says, "He shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ." By such a walk with Christ His servants are helped forward towards the fulfilment of the two tables of the moral law, to which St. Peter alludes in his next words: *And in your godliness love of the brethren; and in your love of the brethren*

love. The last-named love (ἀγάπη) is that highest love, the love of God to men, which is set up as the grand ideal towards which His servants are constantly to press forward; but from this the love of the brethren cannot be severed, nay it must be made the stepping-stone unto it. For, as another Apostle says, "he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, cannot love God, whom he hath not seen" (1 John iv. 20). But love of the brethren is not to be narrowed in the verse before us or elsewhere to love of those who are already known to the Churches as brethren in the Lord. The Gospel of Christ knows no such limits. The commission of the Master was, "Go ye forth into all the world." All mankind are to be won for Him; all are embraced in the name of brethren. For if they be not so now, it is our bounden duty to endeavour that they shall be so. And in thus interpreting we have the mind of Christ with us, who came to seek and to save them that were lost, to die for the sins of the whole world, and who found His brethren among every class who would hear His words and obey them. We have with us, too, the acts of God Himself, who would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and who, with impartial love, maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain upon the just and the unjust, that thus even the evil and unjust may be won to own His Fatherhood. Such Divine love is the end of the commandment (1 Tim. i. 5), and terminates the list of those graces the steps whereto St. Paul has more briefly indicated when he says the love which is most like God's springs from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. In this way shall men be borne upward into the hill of the Lord.

The knowledge of Christ is a lesson in which we

cannot be perfected till we behold Him as He is, but yet through it from the first we receive the earnest and pledge of all that is meant by life and godliness, and the culture of the Divine gifts will yield a rich increase of the same knowledge. *For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Men in this life can draw nearer unto this full knowledge, and the bliss of each new gain prompts to more zealous exertion. There can be no relaxation of effort, no remissness, in such a quest. For hope is fostered by the constant experience of a deepening knowledge, and receives continual pledges that the glory to be revealed is far above what is already known. The enlightened vision grows wider and ampler; and the path, which began in faith, shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The world offers other lights to its votaries, but they lead only into darkness. *For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.* He who has taken no heed to foster within him the light which is kindled by faith, and which can only be kept alive by the grace of the Divine Spirit, is blind, yea blind indeed, for he is self-blinded. He has quenched the inward light which was of God's free gift, and made the light within him to be darkness, a darkness, like Egypt's, which may be felt. Such a man has no insight into the glories of the celestial vision, no joy of the widening prospect which captivates the gaze of the spiritual man. He can see only things close at hand, and is as one bowed downward to the earth, groping a dreary way, with neither hope nor exaltation at the end. For he has forgotten—nay, St. Peter's words are stronger and very striking—λήθην λαβὼν—he has taken hold

upon forgetfulness, made a deliberate choice of that course which obliterates all remembrance of God's initial gift of grace to cleanse him from his old sins. Unmindful of this purification, he has admitted into the dwelling where the Spirit of God would have made a home other spirits more wicked than those first cast out. They have entered in, and dwell there. There is a marked contrast between this expression and the word used for God's gift of faith (ver. 1). That a man receives (λαχὼν) as the bounty of his Lord's love; and if treasured and used, it proves itself the light of life for this world and the next. The wrong path he chooses for himself (λαβὼν), and its close is the blackness of the dark.

Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure. "Wherefore, brethren"—because such terrible blindness as this has fallen upon some, who left their first grace unimproved and allowed even the memory of it to fade away—do you give the more diligence in your religious life. The true way to banish evil is to multiply good, leaving neither room nor time for bad things to spread themselves. When the peril of such things is round about you, it is no time for relaxed effort. Your enemy never relaxes his. He is always active, seeking whom he may devour, and employs not the day only, but the night, when men sleep, to sow his tares. Let him find you ever watchful, ever diligent to hold fast and make abundant the gifts which God has already bestowed upon you. In the foreknowledge of the Father, you are elect from the foundation of the world; and your call is attested by the injunction laid upon you, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." Your inheritance is in store where nothing can assail it. God only asks that you should manifest a wish, a longing, for His blessings; and

He will pour them richly upon you. He has made you of a loftier mould than the inanimate and irrational creation. The flower turns to the sun by a law which it cannot resist. From the Sun of righteousness men can turn away. But the Father's will is that your eyes should be set on the hope which He offers. Then of a certainty it will be realised. Lift up your eyes to the eternal hills, for from thence your help will come. The promise is sure. Strive to keep your hope equally steadfast. For now you belong to the household of Christ; now you are through Him children of the heavenly Father: to this sonship you are elect and have been called, and to it you shall attain if you hold fast your boldness and the glorying of your hope unto the end.

For if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble. The way will be hard, and may be long, the obstacles in your path many and rugged, heaped up by the prince of this world to bar you from advancing and make you faint-hearted; but down into the midst of the danger there shall shine from the Father of lights a ray which shall illumine the darkness and make clear for you the steps in which you ought to tread, and the rod and staff of God's might will support and comfort you.

For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In his first words in this passage the Apostle exhorted the believers to supply something, as it were, of their own towards their spiritual advancement; but when the demand was fully understood, behold God had made ready the means for doing everything which was asked for! Within the precious faith which He bestowed was enfolded the potentiality of every other grace. There they lay, as seeds in a seed-plot. All

that men were bidden to do was to give them culture. Then God's Spirit would operate as the generous sunshine, and cause each hidden power to unfold itself in its time and bloom into beauty and strength. In this verse the Divine assistance is more clearly promised. What men bestow shall be returned unto them manifold. Do your diligence, says the Apostle, and there shall be supplied unto you from the rich stores of God all that can help you forward in your heavenward journey. The kingdom of God shall begin for you while you are passing through this present life. For it can be set up within you. It has been prepared from all eternity in heaven, and will be enjoyed in full fruition when this life is ended. But it is a state, and not a place. The entrance thereto is opened here. The believer is beckoned into it; and with enraptured soul he enjoys through faith a foretaste of the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. Over those joys Christ is King, but He is also the door; and those who enter through Him shall go in and out, and shall surely find pasture, even life for evermore.

XXI

THE VOICE HEARD IN THE HOLY MOUNT

XXI

THE VOICE HEARD IN THE HOLY MOUNT

"Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with *you*. And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we *ourselves* heard come out of heaven, when we were with Him in the holy mount."—2 PETER i. 12–18.

UP to this point the Apostle has spoken of God's abundant grace and the consequent duties of believers. And he has set forth these duties in the most encouraging language. He has pictured first the gift of Divine power, and the precious promises of God, whereby men may be helped to walk onward and upward; and when the labour is ended he has pointed to the door of Christ's eternal kingdom, open to admit the saint to His everlasting rest. Now he turns to describe the duty which he feels to be laid upon himself, and faithful is he in the discharge thereof. "Strengthen thy brethren," is constantly ringing in his ears. *Wherefore*, he says, *I shall be ready always to put you in*

remembrance of these things. He dreads that taking hold of forgetfulness—that λήθην λαβὼν—of which he has spoken before, and against which constant diligence is needed. So far as in him lies, the perilous condition shall come upon none of them. The verb in the best texts expresses far more than that which is rendered in the Authorised Version, "I will not be negligent." It implies a sense of duty and the intention of fulfilling it; it bears within it, too, the thought (which is strengthened by the word *always*) that there may be need for such reminding, if not from internal weakness, yet by reason of external dangers. And to bring to the mind of the Churches the gracious bounty of God in Christ, and to set down the steps whereby the graces bestowed should be fostered and increased, is a subject worthy of an Apostle, a theme which no amount of exhortation can exhaust, and one which ought to prompt the hearers to gratitude and obedience.

Though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you. Knowledge of things that pertain unto godliness is barren unless it be wrought out in the life. Yet knowledge and practice do not always go hand in hand. This was one of the lessons taught by Jesus as He washed the disciples' feet: "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (John xiii. 17). St. Peter longs that the converts should make this blessedness their own. His life's work is to watch for them, that they be not remiss in doing. To none can such a duty more peculiarly belong than to him who holds Christ's special commission to feed the flock. By "the truth which is with you" the Apostle appears to be alluding to the varying degrees of advancement which there must be among the members of the Churches. All have travelled some

way along the road which he has shown them; all have some of the truth within their grasp. They have set their feet on the path, though they be planted with different degrees of firmness. What is needed for each and all is to press forward, not to rest in the present, but to hasten to what lies beyond. For the truth of God is inexhaustible.

Perhaps, too, he thought, as he spake of the truth present with them, that he was of necessity absent and would soon be removed altogether, and the only way by which he could serve them was by his epistle. He could never forget that among those to whom he was writing were the Galatians, over whose falling back from the truth St. Paul had so greatly lamented: who had run well, but had fainted ere the course was over; who had received some truth to be present with them, even the faith of the crucified Jesus, but had been beguiled into letting it slip. Thought of these things shapes his words as he writes, "I shall be ready *always* to put you in remembrance." He rejoices that they are "established," but yet sends them an admonition. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

And I think it right. The word marks the solemn estimate which the Apostle takes of his duty. It is a just and righteous work. Danger is abroad, and he has been made one of Christ's shepherds. Many motives prompt him to write his words of counsel and warning. First, his love for them as his brethren, some of them, perhaps, his children in Christ. Like St. Paul, he has them in his heart. Then, he will fulfil to the utmost the charge which the Lord gave him. He is conscious, too, that opportunities for the fulfilment of his trust will soon come to an end. *As long as I am in this tabernacle,* he says. It is but a frail home, the

body; and with St. Peter age was drawing on. He saw that the time of his departure could not be far off, and this left no excuse for remitting his admonitions. He must be urgent so long as he can. *To stir you up by putting you in remembrance.* The work of the Apostle will be thoroughly done (*διεγείρειν*), and be of that nature for which the Holy Ghost was promised to himself and his fellows. "He shall bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John xiv. 26). Thus would St. Peter, like St. Paul, impart unto the converts some spiritual gift, that he, with them, may be comforted, strengthened, each by the other's faith. So he proceeds to dwell on that Divine manifestation by which his own belief had been confirmed. And there would be memories of St. Paul's lessons also to call to their minds, and many of these would be awakened by an appeal like this. The falling away of the Galatians had been from a different cause, but the memory of the past would warn, and might strengthen, them all in the future against their new dangers.

Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Such a motive makes the appeal most touching. He will soon be removed. To this he looks forward without alarm. His concern is for them, not for himself. He regards his death as the stripping off of a dress: when its use is past it is parted with without regret. To him, as to his brother Apostle, to die would be gain. But he must have had constantly in mind the Master's prophecy, "When thou art old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (John xxi. 18). And in the word "swiftly" he no doubt alludes, not only to the old age in which the end would

naturally come, but also to some sharp stroke by which his departure would be brought to pass. The stretching out of his hands would be a preliminary to the prison and the cross. In the Gospel it is said that Christ's words give the sign (σημαίνων), the indication, by what death he should die. The Apostle employs a stronger word (ἐδήλωσε) here: "made it evident." The English version renders both verbs by "signify," but St. Peter's own expression marks how growing age had made clearer to him the manner in which his death should be accomplished. And the mention of Jesus brings vividly before him the thought of the scene he is about to describe, so vividly that some of the language of the Transfiguration scene is reproduced by him.

Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance. Jesus is related (Luke ix. 31) to have conversed with Moses and Elias of His decease (ἔξοδος) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. The word is rare in this sense, being commonly used, as in Heb. xi. 22, of the *departing* of the children of Israel from Egypt. But it is deeply printed in St. Peter's mind; and he, who looks forward to drinking of his Master's cup and dying somewhere as He died, employs the same word concerning his own end. And the word is another indication of the calm with which he can look forward to his death. As with Christ, there is no reluctance, no shrinking. The change will be but a departure, a passing from one stage to another, the putting off the worn garment of mortality to be clothed upon by the robe which is from heaven.

His letters are the only means whereby he can speak after he has been taken from them. Hence his

earnestness in writing. "I will give diligence." I have urged diligence on you; I will apply the lesson to myself, and make it possible that afterwards on every occasion you may have it before you. When dead, he will yet speak to them; so that in each new trial, in each time of need, they may strengthen their faith or be warned of their danger. "At every time," he says; and thus his strengthening words of admonition are a legacy through the ages to the Church for evermore.

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables. Here the Apostle speaks in the plural number, and it may well be that he means to include St. Paul with himself and James and John. For the evidence which converted that Apostle, though not the same as that vouchsafed to St. Peter, was of the same kind. The Lord had appeared unto him in the way, had made His glory seen and felt, and fixed for ever in the Apostle's heart the reality of His power and presence. His cry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" came from a heart conquered and convinced. He too followed no cunningly devised fable.

By the word (*σεσοφισμένοι*) which is rendered "cunningly devised" we are reminded of the (*σοφία*) wisdom which St. Paul so earnestly disclaims in his first letter to the Corinthians. "I came not with excellency of speech or of *wisdom*," he says; "my preaching was not in persuasive words of *wisdom*, that your faith should not stand in the *wisdom* of men, but in the power of God." The *wisdom* which he speaks is not of this world, but God's *wisdom* in a mystery (1 Cor. ii. 1-7). St. Paul also warns against giving "heed to fables, which minister questionings rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith" (1 Tim. i. 4; cf. also iv. 7 and 2 Tim. iv. 4). In another place

(Titus i. 14) he calls them "Jewish fables," a name which is of the same import as the "Jewish vanities" of Ignatius,[1] a name by which he intimates that they darken and confuse the mind. The legends of the Talmud, the subtleties of the rabbinical teaching, and the allegorising interpretations of Philo are the delusions to which both the Apostles refer. The evidence on which they ask credence for their teaching is of another kind. "That which was from the beginning," is the testimony of another Apostle, "that which we heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life, . . . that declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us" (1 John i. 1–3). St. Peter had seen, and so had St. Paul; and they constantly appealed to, and rested their teaching on, facts and the historic reality of Christ's life and work.

When we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the contrast to that mythic and allegorical teaching to which he has just alluded. From it men could derive neither help in the present, nor hope for the future. It generated superstition, and its followers believed a lie. Often it denied the continuity of revelation, and cast aside all the records thereof. Like theosophic dreams in every age, it was always unprofitable, nearly always pernicious. On the other hand, the teaching of Christ's Apostles proclaimed a power which could save men from their sins, and imparted a hope that stretched out beyond the present, looking for the time when the Lord would reappear. All power is given unto Christ. He is made

[1] *Ep. ad Magn.* 8.

Redeemer and Lord, and is to be at last the Judge of men. The assurance of His coming had been proclaimed by St. Peter in his former letter as a consolation under affliction. Faith, tried by suffering, will be found unto praise, and glory, and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter i. 7). This is the climax of the glad tidings of the Gospel. But Christ comes to His people through all the days; and they are conscious of His coming, and inspired thereby and enabled for their work.

But we were eye-witnesses of His majesty. He has already (1 Peter iii. 22) spoken of the fact of Christ's ascension; he is now about to describe what was seen on the holy mount. These things are facts and verities, and not fables. But yet there was more revealed in them than either eye could grasp, or tongue could tell. They were God's truth in a mystery, which supplied new thought for a whole life-time. So for "eye-witnesses" the Apostle uses a word akin to that which twice over he employs in the former Epistle (ii. 12; iii. 2) to describe the effect which Christian lives, when fully scanned, shall have upon the unbeliever. They shall have power to stop the mouths of opponents and to win them to the faith which before they maligned. Such deep insight into the power, and work, and glory of Jesus was imparted to the Apostles at the Transfiguration. They were initiated into the wisdom of God, and henceforth became prophets of the Incarnation; they were convinced that the Jesus with whom they companied was very God manifest in the flesh. The voice from heaven proclaimed it; it was attested by the glorified presence of Moses and Elijah, and by the majesty which for a moment broke through the veil of Christ's flesh. Later on they saw Him

risen from the dead, beheld His ascension into glory, and heard from the angels the promise of His return. Not without much meaning does the Apostle use a special pronoun (ἐκείνου) as he dwells on this scene of His majesty. For he would impress on his converts the identity of that Jesus whom he had known in the flesh with the very Son of God sent down from heaven.

For He received from God the Father honour and glory. For the bright cloud which overshadowed them on the mountain-top was the visible token of the presence of God, as of old the cloud of glory had been, where God dwelt above the cherubim; while the honour and glory of Jesus were manifested when He was proclaimed to be the very Son of God. *When there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* To express the magnificence of the glory which he beheld, the Apostle uses a word not found elsewhere in the New Testament. The Septuagint has it to describe the splendour of Jeshurun's God, who rideth in His *excellency* on the skies (Deut. xxxiii. 26). And it is this outward brightness of the shroud of the Godhead which tells all that human powers can receive of the majesty which it hides, just as His palace, the heavens, declares constantly the glory of God.

The words spoken by the heavenly voice vary here from the records of each of the three Gospels. In one case the variation is slight, but there is no precise agreement. Had the Epistle been the work of some forger of a later age than St. Peter's, we may rest assured that there would have been complete accord with one Evangelist or the other. There is a like diversity in the records of the words of the inscription above Christ's cross. Substantial truth,

not verbal preciseness, is what the Evangelists sought to leave to the Church; and their fidelity is proved by nothing more powerfully than by the diverse features of the Gospel narratives.

And this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We learn here why the Apostles were taken with Jesus to witness His transfiguration. Just before that event we find (Matt. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22) it recorded by each of the Synoptists that Jesus had begun to show unto His disciples how He must suffer and die at Jerusalem. To Peter, who, as at other times, was the mouthpiece of the rest, such a declaration was unacceptable; but at his expression of displeasure he met the rebuke, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." He, and the rest with him, felt no doubt that such a death as Jesus had spoken of would be, humanly speaking, the ruin of their hopes. What these hopes were they did not formulate, but we can learn their character from some of their questionings. Now, on the top of Tabor, these three representatives of the apostolic band behold Moses and Elias appearing in glory, and Christ glorified more than they; and the subject of which they spake was the very death of which they had so disliked to hear: the decease which He was about to accomplish (πληροῦν) in Jerusalem (Luke ix. 31). The verb which the Evangelist uses tells of the fulfilment of a prescribed course, and thus St. Peter was taught, and the rest with him, to speak of that death afterwards as he does in his former letter. "Christ was verily foreordained" to this redeeming work "before the foundation of the world." They heard that He who was to die was the very Son of God. The voice came from the glory of heaven; and from

henceforth their hearts were still, even Peter's voice being less heard than before. Down from the mountain they brought much illumination, much solemn pondering. We can feel why it was that "they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen"; we can feel, too, that from henceforth the scene of this vision would be the holy mount. God's voice had been heard there attesting the Divinity of their Lord and Master; the place whereon they had thus stood was for evermore holy ground.

XXII

THE LAMP SHINING IN A DARK PLACE

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"And we have the word of prophecy *made* more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost."—2 PETER i. 19–21.

THE rendering of the first words in this passage must be reckoned among the distinct improvements of the Revised Version. As the translation stands in the Authorised Version, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy," it conveys a sense which many must have found perplexing. The Apostle had just dwelt on the confirmation of faith, both for himself and those to whom he preached, which was ministered by the vision of the glory of Jesus and by the proclamation of His Divinity by God's voice from heaven. Could any prophetic message vie in his estimate with the assurance of such a revelation? Now what St. Peter meant is made clear. *And we have the word of prophecy made more sure*—more sure because we have received the confirmation of all that the prophets spake dimly and in figure. The Apostle and the rest of the Jewish people had been trained in the ancient Scriptures, and gathered from them, some more and some less, light concerning God's scheme of salvation. There were,

however, but few who had attained a true insight into what was revealed. They had dwelt, as a rule, too exclusively on all that spake of the glory of the promised Redeemer and of His coming to reign and to conquer. That there should be suffering in His life, they had put out of sight, though the prophets had foretold it; and so when Christ spake of His crucifixion, soon to come to pass in Jerusalem, St. Peter exclaimed—and he had the feelings of his nation with him—"That be far from Thee." The voice on the holy mount and the words of Moses and Elias had opened their eyes to the full drift of prophetic revelation; and by the illumination of that scene of glory, where yet the lot of suffering was contemplated as near at hand, there had been given to them a grasp of the whole scope of prophecy, and their partial and distorted conception of the work of Christ was banished for ever.

Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed. The idea of a volume of New Testament Scriptures had not entered St. Peter's mind. He knows that St. Paul's letters (iii. 15, 16) are read by some, who do not all profit by the privilege; and his own letters he intends to be an abiding admonition to the Churches. The need, too, of a record of Christ's life and works, a gospel, must have begun to be felt. But yet he points the converts to the ancient records of Israel as a guide to direct their lives. They had heard the Gospel story from the lips of himself and others. Thus they had the key to unlock what hitherto had seemed hard to understand, and could study their prophetic volume with a new and perfect light. This he means by "ye do well." Ye go to the true source of guidance, drink of the fountain of true wisdom, and gain strength and refreshment when it is much needed. Duly to take

heed of these records is to search out their lessons and labour after that deeper sense which is enshrined beneath the word. Given as they were at various times and in various fashions, and given to point on to God's purposes in the future, these Scriptures must needs have been dark to those who first received them, nor could the men whom God chose to deliver them have been fully conscious of all they were meant to declare as the ages rolled on and brought their fulfilment nearer. Nor are they all luminous even yet, but they grow ever more so to those who take heed.

As unto a lamp shining in a dark place. Spite of all the light we can compass, the world will always be in one sense a dark place. It is a world of beauty, full of the tokens of God's handiwork, the indications of His love. But evil has also made an entrance; and the trail of the serpent is evident in the sorrow, the disease, the wickedness, that abound on every side. And problems continually present themselves which even to the saints are hard to be solved. Many a psalm records the conflict which has to be passed through ere God's ways can be reconciled to men. We must go into His house, draw near to Him, feel to the full His Fatherhood, ere our hearts can be contented. Nay, the disquiet breaks out again and again. So God, in His mercy, has provided His lamp for those who will use it; and to those who take heed it furnishes ever new light. The history, the prophecy, the devotion, the allegory, of the holy volume are all full of illustrations of the firm purpose of redemption, of the eternal, unchanging love of Jehovah, thwarted only by the perverseness of those whom He is longing to save from their sins. And to call God's revelation in His word a lamp is a striking and instructive figure. It

is something which you can take with you, and carry into the dark places whither your lot may send you, and use its light just where and when you need it. But its light must be fed by the constant oil of diligent study, or its usefulness will not be found to the full.

And the truth is the same if we apply the lesson to nations and Churches as it is for individuals. The records were given to a nation chosen to keep the knowledge of God alive in the world. The word spoken did not profit, as it was meant to do, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. And there is the same faith needed still. The light of a lamp in a dark place shines but a little way; but by the rays of the Divine lamp men are to walk, in faith that the steps beyond will become clear in their turn. And thus alone will the problems of life be really solved, the religious contentions, the social difficulties, the trials of family life, the individual doubts and fears: all are elements of darkness; all need to be illumined by the lamp which God has provided. Oh that men would burnish it by diligent heed, and keep its radiance at the full by constant seeking thereunto!

Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. The day has begun to dawn for those who will lift up their heads to its breaking. The day-star from on high hath visited the earth in the person of Christ, but the full day will not be till He returns again. Yet His coming into the world was meant to lighten every man, and to win all men to walk in His light. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me," is His own promise. And in that decease of which He spake with Moses and Elijah He has been lifted up. But He has left it to them that love Him to lift Him up constantly before the eyes of men, to exalt Him by

their lives; and our lax performances make the progress of His *drawing all men*, to halt. We fail to make due use of the lamp which He has put ready to our hand, and which only needs to be grasped. The perfect day will not come to us in this life, but He gives to His faithful ones glimpses of the dawn. They learn the presence of the Sun of righteousness, though as yet they see Him only through the mists and darkness of life; and they are cheered with the certainty of the coming day. And the daystar of the Spirit is kindled in the hearts of those who ask Him to dwell there; and they are led forward into greater and greater truth, into richer and fuller light. And for the same end the Spirit is promised to the Church of Christ: that she may be enabled having used the lamp first given with all faithfulness, to open to men the ways of God more fully, and, amid the changes of times and varying vicissitudes and needs of men and nations, to prove that the only satisfaction to the soul is the increasing knowledge of the oneness of God's purpose and eternity of His love. To such a power she will be helped by giving heed to the lamp in every dark place and seeking in its light the elucidation of all hard questions.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. The Greek words need to be taken account of before we can gather the true meaning of this clause. That which is translated "is" is much more frequently rendered "comes to pass," and bears the sense of "arises," "has its origin." "Interpretation" is the translation of a word which occurs here only in the New Testament, and implies the "loosing" of what is complicated, the "clearing" of what is obscure. The lesson which the Apostle would give relates to the right appreciation of the Old Testament

Scriptures, which contain the prophecy which he has called above "the lamp in a dark place." He intends to say something which may incline men to follow its guidance. The prophetic writings furnish us with illustrations how the problems which arose in the lives of the men of old time, both about events around them and also about the dispensations of Divine providence, found their solution. Thus they furnish rules and principles for time to come; and that men may be induced to confide in their guidance is the object of St. Peter's words. He bids the converts know that these unravellings and clearings of the ways of God are not men's private interpretation of what they beheld. This was not the manner in which they came to be known. They are not evolved out of human consciousness, pondering on the facts of life and the ways of God, nor are they the individual exposition of those whom God employed as His prophets. They are messages and lessons which came from one and the same impelling power, from one and the same illuminating influence, even from God Himself, and so are uniform in spirit and teaching from first to last; and He from whom and through whom they are given can say by the mouth of the last of the prophetic body, "I am Jehovah; I change not" (Mal. iii. 6).

Although the Apostle uses in this Epistle the word "Scriptures" (iii. 16) for the writings of New Testament teachers, it is not likely that he in mind included them among the prophetic Scriptures of which he here speaks. We, knowing the flood of light which the Gospels and Epistles pour upon the Old Testament, can now apply his words to them, fully perceiving that they are a true continuation of the Divine enlightenment, another spring from the same heavenly fountain.

Those who would explain "interpretation" as the judgement which men now exercise in the study and application of the words of Scripture forget the force of the verb (γίνεται) "comes to pass," and that the Apostle is exalting the source and origin of the words of prophecy, that he may the more enforce his lesson, "Ye do well to take heed to them."

For no prophecy ever came by the will of man. Prophecy makes known what never could have entered into the mind or understanding of men, nor were the prophetic words that have come down to us written because men wished to publish views and imaginations of their own. Man is not the source of prophecy. That lay above and beyond the human penmen. Nay, men could not, had they so willed, have spoken of the things there written for the enlightenment of the ages. These are deep things, belonging to the foreknowledge of God alone, by whom His Son was foreknown as the Lamb without spot before the foundation of the world. Of this the book of prophecy tells from first to last: of the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head; of the family from which a seed should come in whom all the earth should be blessed; of the rod to spring from the stem of Jesse; of the king who was to rule in righteousness; of the time when the kingdom of the Lord's house should be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations should flow into it; of the day when all men should know the Lord from the least to the greatest, when the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Such tidings came not into the thoughts of men except as they were put there from the Lord; and they tell of things yet to come that are beyond the grasp of men unless they be spiritually-minded and enlightened.

For not only are the prophetic Scriptures God's special gift: the insight into their full meaning comes also from Him. Beyond the physical sense it is true, "The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord is the Maker of them both" (Prov. xx. 12).

But men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost. The Authorised Version translates a text which had, "*Holy* men of God spake as they were moved by the *Holy* Ghost." And this repetition of an adjective is after St. Peter's manner, though the oldest manuscripts do not support it here. Compare the thrice-repeated "righteous" in the notice of Lot in the next chapter (ii. 7, 8). And the Authorised Version describes most truly the agents whom God chooses. He will have none but holy men to be the heralds of His truth. A Caiaphas may be constrained to utter His counsels, but as His prophets God takes the holy among men. These can grasp more of His teaching, and we receive more than we should through other channels. By their zeal for holiness they are brought nearer unto God, and made more receptive of the teaching of the Spirit, who Himself is holy. But "men spake from God" conveys a true idea of prophecy. Even one who was not holy could feel that the power given to him was not his own, nor could he speak after his own will. "What the Lord saith unto me, that must I speak," was the confession of Balaam, though his greed for gain prompted him to the opposite. And there are many expressions in the Old Testament which bear witness to the effective operation of God's power, as when we read of the Spirit of the Lord coming mightily upon those whom He had chosen to do His bidding. And the same lesson is to be found in St. Peter's words here. "Being moved" is literally

"being carried." An impulse was given to them, and a power which was above their own. This is betokened, too, when the Old Testament prophets tell how the Spirit of the Lord carried them to this place or that, where a revelation was to be imparted which they should publish in His name. Thus were they moved by the Holy Ghost, and thus were they able to speak from God.

Such is St. Peter's lesson on the nature and office of prophecy. It is an illumination to which men could not have attained by any wisdom of their own, nay could not have framed the wish to attain unto it. For it lay hid among God's mysteries. It is imparted from the holy God to holy men, as His mediators to the less spiritual in the world; it has received abundant confirmation through the incarnation of the Son of God, but yet it has many a lesson for mankind to ponder and seek to comprehend. It is their wisdom who follow its guidance and bear it with them as a lamp amid the dispensations of Providence, which still are not all clear, and amid the darkness which will often surround them while they live here. That men may be prompted to its use, God is a God that hideth Himself, yet through it He will lead those who follow its light along the road to immortality.

XXIII

THE LORD KNOWETH HOW TO DELIVER

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"But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not. For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement; and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* lawless deeds): the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgement."—2 PETER ii. 1–9.

THIS second chapter contains much more of a direct description of the heretical teaching and practices from which the converts were in danger, and is full of warning and comfort, both alike drawn from that Old Testament prophecy to the light of which St. Peter has just been urging them to take heed. The chapter has many features and much of its language in common

with the Epistle of St. Jude. But the opening of the chapter seems a suitable place to call attention to a difference of motive which is manifested in this Epistle and in that. They resemble one another greatly in the illustrations which they have in common, but St. Peter makes a twofold use of them: while showing that the ungodly will assuredly be punished, he comforts the righteous with the lesson that, be they ever so few, even as the eight who were saved at the Deluge, or as Lot, with his diminished family, at the overthrow of Sodom, the Lord knows how to deliver His servants out of trials. Of this latter side of the prophetic picture St. Jude shows us nothing. The evil-doings of the tempters must have waxed grosser in his day, and he is only concerned to preach the certainty of their condemnation. The unbelievers in the wilderness, the angels who sinned, the Cities of the Plain, the error of Balaam, and the overthrow of Korah are all cited in proof that the wicked shall not escape; but he has no word about the deliverance of those whose souls are tortured by the wicked doings of the sinners among whom it is their lot to live.

But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. It is as though the Apostle would say, Be not unduly dismayed. The lamp of Old Testament prophecy shows that yours is a lot which has befallen others. As Israel of old was God's people, so the Church of Christ is now. And among them again and again false prophets arose, not only those of Baal and Asherah, not only those who served the calves at Dan and Bethel, but those who called themselves by Jehovah's

name, and of whom He says to Jeremiah, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake I unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (Jer. xiv. 14). The picture is exactly repeated for these Asian Churches. False teaching had attached itself to the true, used its language, and professed to be at one with it, except in so far as it was superior. For the history of corruptions in the faith repeats itself, and—

> "Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The devil always builds a chapel there."

It is the most perilous aspect of error when it parades itself as the truest truth. Hence the name by which St. Peter calls this dangerous teaching: "destructive heresies." They beguile unstable souls to their ruin. Their exponents choose the name of Christ to call themselves by, but cast aside the doctrine of the Cross both in its discipline for their lives, and as the altar of human redemption. And the men to whom St. Peter alludes were either among the teachers, or put themselves forward to teach; and there was a danger lest their authority should be recognised. They accepted Christ, but not as He loves to be accepted. He has called Himself Lord and Master, and has paid the price which makes Him so; but by their interpretations both of His nature and His office these men in very deed renounced and deserted His service, ignored their relation as His bondservants, and in this way denied the Master that bought them. Soon they chose other masters and became the slaves of the world and the flesh. Thus they entered on the path that leads to

destruction, and soon it will come upon them. They who destroyed others shall themselves be destroyed. The lords whom they serve have all their empire in this life; and when the end thereof comes, it comes all too soon, and is a dread overthrow of everything they have set store by. On their lot the lamp of prophecy sheds its light: "How suddenly do they perish and come to a fearful end."

And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. St. Jude, who had seen the results of such teaching, says these men turned the very grace of God into lasciviousness; they perverted the teachings of the Gospel concerning the freedom which is in Christ, and their phraseology they made to have a Pauline ring about it. Did he not teach how Christ had made men free? Had they not heard from him that men should cast off trust in the bondage of the Law? In this wise they taught a doctrine of lawless self-indulgence, which they extolled as the token of entire emancipation and of a loftier nature on which the taint of sins could leave no defilement. In the blindness of their hearts, self-chosen blindness, of which they boasted as knowledge, they gave themselves over to the flesh, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

St. Peter knows that baits of this sort appeal to the natural man; that there is within the citadel of the heart a traitorous weakness which is ready to betray it to the enemy. So, with prophetic foresight, he laments, Many shall follow after them. And such sinners do not sin unto themselves: their falling away brings calamity on the whole Church of Christ. It did so then; it does so still. The faithful cannot escape from the obloquy which is due to the faithless; and the

world, which cares little for Christ, will readily point to the evil lives which it sees in the renegade brethren, and draw the conclusion that in secret the rest run to the same excess of riot. Evil-speaking of this kind became abundantly common in the first Christian centuries, and furnishes the object of many Christian apologies.

And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you. St. Paul in writing to Timothy gives a comment which throws much light on these words. He tells of men who consent not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus denying the Master that bought them. He speaks of them as bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain; and he adds, "They that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. vi. 3-10). From the first days of the Church's history we see, from the instances of Ananias and Sapphira, and of Simon, with his offer of money to the Apostles, that both among the disciples and the would-be teachers covetousness made itself very apparent. The communistic basis on which the society was constituted lent itself to the schemes of those who desired to make a gain of their Christian profession. In the time when St. Peter wrote the evil had spread. Teachers were discovering that, by a modification or adaptation of the Christian language and doctrines, they could draw after them many followers. These were the feigned words to which the Apostle alludes, and the contributions of their

satisfied hearers were proving a gainful merchandise. The Gnostic teachers were of various sorts, but of all alike the language was boastful as coming of superior insight; great, swelling words they spake, having men's persons in regard because of the prospects of advantage. The evil was a sore one, and is so wherever it finds entry. And later ages have also known somewhat of its mischief. It is the wisdom of all Christian communities so to order themselves that their teachers and guides may be safe from this temptation. For such teachers do not stop at small beginnings of error, but prophesy smooth things, and close their eyes at evil; nay, in this case they seem to have encouraged sensual living, as though it were an indication of the freedom of which they boasted.

Whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not. In thought the Apostle reads the book of prophecy. It is as if he said, "It is written in the prophetic word." And when the overthrow of the sinners comes to pass, those who behold it may say, "Thus is the prophecy fulfilled." The doom of such sinners is sure. They may seem to live their lives with impunity for a while, as though God's eternal law were inoperative; but the issue is certain. None such escape. God's mills grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. And the lot of such men is destruction. Of illustrations the Apostle chooses three, applying each to a different vice of these teachers of error. These men were proud; so were the angels that sinned, but their pride was only a prelude to their fall. These men were disobedient; so were the antediluvian sinners, and would neither hearken nor turn, and so the Flood came and swept them all away. These men were sensual;

so were the dwellers in the Cities of the Plain, and their overthrow remains still a memorial of God's wrath against such sinners. Verily the sentence of all such men is written from of old.

For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement. To each of the three instances which St. Peter adduces the reader is left to supply the unmistakable conclusion, "Neither will He spare the sinners of to-day." The sentences are all the more solemn from their incompleteness. Some have thought that the reference in this verse is to the narrative found in Gen. vi. 3; but that account is very full of difficulties, and there is no mention of a judgement upon those who offended. It seems more sound exposition to take the Apostle's words as spoken of him concerning whom Christ has told us (John viii. 44) that he was a murderer from the beginning and stood not in the truth, and of the condemnation of whose pride St. Paul speaks to Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 6). For him and for his fellow-sinners the Gospel teaches us (Matt. xxv. 41) that eternal fire was prepared, and an apostle (James ii. 19) says that "the devils believe and shudder," it must be in apprehension of a coming judgement. All that St. Peter here says is implied in these Scriptural allusions to Satan and his fall; and it is more prudent to apply to them the highly figurative language of the Apostle here, which is exactly after his manner, than to seek for fanciful interpretations of the Mosaic story. We may rest assured by the way in which these things are spoken of, though but dimly, by Christ and His Apostles, that they formed a portion of Jewish religious teaching and constituted part of the faith of St. Peter

and his contemporaries, though there is but little mention of the fallen angels in the Old Testament.

And spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. Here the Apostle points to a consolation for the converts amid their trials. The ungodly do not escape, be their multitude ever so great. A world full of sinners is involved in one common overthrow. Nor are the righteous forgotten, though their number be but few. The lamp of prophecy sheds much light here. Amid all God's dispensations toward Israel, His faithful ones were the remnant only; but these were saved by the grace of the Lord, they were brought out from the destruction, and not forsaken, and had a promise that they should take root downward and bear fruit upward. The words in which St. Peter describes the chief person of the few saved in the Deluge appear intended to point out that feature in Noah's history which most resembled the lot of the Asian Churches. They were now, as he was of old, God's heralds in the midst of a naughty world; and to bring to their minds the thought of his long-sustained opposition and mockery could hardly fail to nerve them to stand fast. What lot could be more desperate than the Patriarch's? For a hundred and twenty years by action and by word he published his message, and it fell on deaf ears; yet God was guarding him (ἐφύλαξεν) through it all, and words could not express more complete safety than when the early record tells us, ere the Flood came, "The Lord shut him in."

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly.

These cities stood in a land fair enough to be likened to the garden of the Lord. To Lot himself their fertile fields had been a temptation, and by yielding thereto he brought on himself a plenitude of sorrow; and the sacred record counts his deliverance rather to the faith and righteousness of Abraham than to himself. God remembered Abraham, and brought Lot out of the overthrow. One of the fairest parts of His world God condemned for the wickedness of them that inhabited it. Nature was defaced for man's sin, and still lies desolate as a perpetual homily against such ungodly living as often comes of wealth and fulness of bread. After such a state were these false teachers seeking while they made their gain of their disciples; and in the later times of which St. Jude speaks, having fostered all that was carnal within and around them, in those things which they understood naturally, there they cast themselves away.

And delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds). The thrice-named righteousness of Lot is perhaps thus set down because of the struggle which it must have been to maintain the fear of Abraham's God among such sinful surroundings. Lot was in the land of the enemy, and his deliverance is pictured as a very rescue: he was saved, yet so as by fire. He had gone down into the plain with thoughts of a life of abundance, and it may be of ease, a contrast to the wandering life which he had hitherto shared with Abraham. Instead of this he found anguish and distress of mind, which no amount of temporal prosperity could alleviate; and to this would be added self-reproach. It was of his

own choice that he was dwelling among them. The Apostle paints his misery in the strongest terms. He was distressed; and of the sights and sounds on every side, and never ceasing, he made a torture to his soul. It was no mere offence to him that these things were so: it was very anguish to see men setting at defiance every law human and Divine. To behold the evils of a lascivious life waxing rampant in the midst of the Christian Churches, and countenanced by those who assumed the office of teachers, must have been an agony to the faithful akin to that with which Lot tortured himself. St. Peter would strengthen the drooping hearts of the brethren; and no greater comfort could there be found than this which he offers, taking the lamp of prophecy and shedding its rays of hope into the dark places of their lives.

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation. Already he has given the lesson (i. 6) that true godliness must have its root in patience. It is a perfect trust, which rests securely on the Father's love, and willingly waits His time. The hearts of the faithful ones must have found solace in the thought which he here joins to his former teaching. The trials they endure are grievous, but "The Lord knows" is an unfailing support. The floods of ungodliness make His servants many a time afraid; but when they feel that there, as amid the raging ocean, the Lord ruleth, they are not overwhelmed. They are protected by Omnipotence; and the tiny grains of sand, which check the fierce tide, are an emblem of how out of weakness He can ordain strength. Hence there comes a knowledge to the struggling saint which makes him full of courage, whatever trials threaten. The world has its wrathful Nebuchadnezzars, whose threats at times are

as a fiery furnace; but he is proof against them all who can say and feel, "The Lord knows." I am not careful nor disturbed; my God, in whom I trust, is able to deliver me, and He will deliver me. The Lord knoweth the way of the godly, and His knowledge means safety and eternal deliverance.

And to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgement. The unrighteous—yes, over them too God keeps ward. They cannot hide themselves from Him, and through their conscience He makes life a continuous chastisement. They may seem to men to walk on heedlessly, but they have hidden tortures of which their fellows can take no count. Even the offender against human laws, who dreads that his sin will be found out, carries in his bosom a constant scourge. Fear hath torment (*κόλασιν ἔχει*), and this it is of which the Apostle speaks. And if the dread of man's judgement can work terror, how much sorer must their alarm be who have the fiery indignation of the wrath of God in their thoughts and stinging their soul. Such men are kept all their life long under punishment. Yet in this constant anguish we trace God's mercy: He sends it that men may turn in time. His blows on the sinful heart are meant to be remedial; and those who disregard His chastisements to the last will go away, self-condemned, self-destroyed, despisers of Divine love, to a doom prepared, not for them, but for the devil and his angels.

XXIV

"BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM"

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"But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion. Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities: whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgement against them before the Lord. But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed, suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing; *men* that count it pleasure to revel in the daytime, spots and blemishes, revelling in their lovefeasts while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unsteadfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing; forsaking the right way, they went astray having followed the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong-doing; but he was rebuked for his own transgression: a dumb ass spake with man's voice and stayed the madness of the prophet."—2 Peter ii. 10–16.

THE Apostle now pictures in the darkest colours the evil-doing and evil character of those who are bringing into the Churches their "sects of perdition," those wolves in sheep's clothing who are mixing themselves, and are likely to make havoc, among the flock of Christ. He hopes that thus the brethren, being forewarned, will also be forearmed. And not only does he describe these bold offenders: he also reiterates in many forms the certainty of their evil fate. They aim at destroying others, and shall themselves meet destruction; their wrong-doing shall bring a recompense in

kind upon their own heads. They are a curse among the people, but the curse will also fall on themselves; they are agents of ruin, and shall perish in the overthrow which they are devising.

But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion. These chiefly—that is, above other sinners—does God keep under punishment. It cannot be otherwise, for on them His chastisements have little effect. They have entered on a road from which return is rare, neither do they take hold on the paths of life; their whole bent is for that which defileth, not only defiling them, but spreading defilement on every side. They are renegades, too, from the service of Christ; and having cast off their allegiance to Him, they make their lust their law. The verse describes the same character in two aspects: those who walk after the flesh follow no prompting but appetite, have no lord but self.

Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities. The Apostle passes on to describe another and more terrible manifestation of the lawlessness of these false teachers. They have so sunk themselves in the grossness of material self-indulgence that they revile and set at nought the spiritual world and the powers that exist therein. In the term "dignities" the Apostle's thoughts are of the angels, against whom these sinners scruple not to utter their blasphemies. The good angels, the messengers from heaven to earth, the ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, they are bold to deny; while concerning the evil angels, to whose temptations they have surrendered themselves, they scoff, representing their lives as free and self-chosen, and at their own disposal. The two terms "daring," "self-willed,"

seem to point respectively to these two forms of blasphemy. They tremble not, they dare to deny the existence of the good, and they shrink not to mock at the influence of the powers of evil. Thus in mind and thought they are as debased as in their bodies, and by their lessons they corrupt as much as by their acts.

Whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgement against them before the Lord. The explanation of this passage is not without difficulty, because of the indefiniteness of the words "against them." To whom is reference here made? It can hardly be questioned that by δόξαι, "dignities," literally "glories," in the previous verse the Apostle meant angels, the dignities of the spirit-world, in contradistinction to κυριότης, "dominion," in which he before referred to those earthly authorities whom these false teachers set at nought. The verbs used in the two clauses support this view. The dominion they venture to despise, at the dignities they rail, whereas they ought to be afraid of them. Now even to the fallen angels there attaches a dignity by reason of their first estate. In the New Testament the chief of them is called by Christ Himself "the prince of this world" (John xiv. 30), and by St. Paul "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2); and he has a sovereignty over those who shared his rebellion and his fall. Having described the railing of the false teachers in the previous verse as directed alike against the evil angels and the good, it seems preferable here to take "against them" as applying to the evil angels. Even against them, though they must be conscious of their sin and rebellion against God, the good angels, who still abide in the presence of the Lord, bring no railing judgement, utter no reproach or upbraiding.

There may have been in St. Peter's thought that solemn scene depicted in Zech. iii., where, in the presence of the angel of the Lord, that highest angel who is Jehovah's special representative, Joshua the high-priest appears, and at his right hand Satan standing to be his adversary, and to charge him, and the nation through him, with their remissness in the work of the restoration of God's temple. There the angel of the Lord, full of mercy, as Satan was full of hate, checked the adversary's accusation, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan." The same application of the words "against them" is suggested by the apocryphal illustration in St. Jude (ver. 9), where in the contention about the body of Moses no greater rebuke is administered to the devil by the archangel Michael.

This exposition does not remove all difficulty. For as the angels in the verse appear to be spoken of as superior in might and power to these corrupt teachers, it seems natural at first sight to refer to them the indefinite expression, and to explain that the angels, though they be so exalted, bring no railing judgement before God against these teachers and their evil doings. But from what Scripture tells us of the angels, it is not easy to understand how or why they should bring such a judgement. Nowhere is such an office assigned to, or exercised by, these spiritual beings, nor are we anywhere told that the observance of the deeds of the wicked is in their province. They rejoice over one sinner that repenteth; they stand in God's presence as the representatives of spotless innocence; they are sent forth by God as His messengers of judgement and of love; but we never find them as accusers of the wicked. That office Satan has taken for his own.

But the words which the Apostle uses seem hardly to make it necessary that the comparison should be between angels and these teachers of destruction. In the passage of Zechariah which we judge to have been in St. Peter's mind when he wrote, the angel is that mightiest spirit among the angelic host who is identified in the language of the prophet with Jehovah Himself; and the angel in St. Jude's illustration is the archangel Michael. Conceiving that by "angels" St. Peter intends these chief members of the celestial powers, the sentence may be taken to mean that the most glorious beings among the angelic throng, those who are greater in might and power than the "dignities" of whom he has spoken, bring no railing judgement even against the fallen angels, whereas these men presume to blaspheme beings of an order far above themselves. Such a conception of subordination in the spirit-world as is here suggested is not foreign to New Testament thought. St. Paul speaks of the angels in heaven as representing "principality, power, might, and dominion" (Eph. i. 21); and in the same Epistle the evil angels are mentioned in like terms: "the principalities, the powers, the world-rulers of this darkness" (vi. 12). Similar language is found also in Col. i. 16. Taking this view of St. Peter's meaning, the daring and presumption of these false teachers are set in a stronger contrast. Whereas the highest angels, those who stand first among the heavenly host and dwell in the immediate presence of the Lord, though they might accuse Satan and his angels of rebellion, yet refrain; these bold transgressors among the race of men cast forth their blasphemy against the whole spiritual world.

But these, as creatures without reason, born mere

animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed. The glory of man in creation is his reason. It is bestowed that he may freely, and not by constraint, consent unto the will of God, and also may by it discipline the body and hinder it from becoming his master. For the soul tabernacling in the flesh there is ever this peril, and by it these false teachers in the Asian Churches had been ensnared. Thus they were degraded, and were frustrating the end for which the light of reason was given. They were become like the horse and mule, which have no understanding. When the serpent tempted Eve, he set before her his own elevation through the fruit which to her was forbidden.

"I of brute human, ye of human gods,"

was his tempting speech. These men had given themselves up for a less noble bribe. The bait of sensual indulgence was offered, and their acceptance of it had brought them down to the level of creatures without reason. Their conduct and their lessons merited such a comparison, and showed how their nobler part had been warped by excess. To blaspheme against the powers of the spirit-world is conduct which can only be paralleled by that of the senseless animals, which, with utter ignorance of consequences, will rush upon objects whose strength they know not, and perish in their blind onslaught. But the beasts were born to be taken and destroyed; no higher fate was in their power. Men were meant for a nobler end, and it is only when the rein is given to appetite that they become from human brutish in their knowledge, more brutish than to know. Thus in their ignorance they rail at all loftier thought, and of their

railing make a show of knowledge. Here they are more noxious than the unreasoning brutes. Their blinding lessons gain a hearing; and those who listen are drawn on by the same lust, and willingly follow after ignorance. But the work of all carries condemnation with it. Man, whose gaze was meant ever to be upward, is bowed down to earth like the beasts of the field, which are meant only for capture and destruction. On such perversion God will surely visit. They shall reap the fruit of their bold self-will, and in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

Suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing. The Authorised Version translates a somewhat different text (*κομιούμενοι*), "and shall receive the reward of wrong-doing." This is the easier sentence, and connects itself well with what precedes; but it has not the strongest support. By the text which the Revised Version has adopted (*ἀδικούμενοι*) the Apostle does not mean that these sinners meet a punishment which they have not deserved, and in that sense suffer wrong; but that they are themselves brought under the penalties of the wrong into which they are leading others. As the Psalmist says, their wickedness comes down on their own pate, and in the net which they hid privily is their own foot taken. They differ from Balaam, whose example St. Peter is soon about to instance. These men secure the reward they seek, larger resources to squander on their lust; yet this, their success, as they would call it, proves their overthrow.

Men that count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They that are drunken are drunken in the night, and the same holds ordinarily of other excesses. They come not to the light because their deeds are evil.

But these men have cast aside all such timorousness. They find a zest in outrage and in going beyond others, so as to add the daytime to the night for their indulgences. The sense of "luxury that lasts but for a day," that is ephemeral, and perishes in the using, is hardly to be extracted from the Greek; but with St. James (v. 5) in mind, where the verb is connected with the noun of this verse, "Ye have lived delicately on the earth and taken your pleasure," it may perhaps be allowable, as some have done, to interpret *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ* as signifying "the time of this present life." The men live as though life were bestowed for no other object than their revelry.

Spots and blemishes. St. Peter must have had in his thought the epithets which he applied to Christ: "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter i. 9). Utterly alien to the spirit and life of Jesus is these men's wantonness. They belong rather to him who is described as a roaring lion, walking about to find whom he may devour.

Revelling in their lovefeasts while they feast with you. Here also the Revised Version accepts a text different from that rendered by the Authorised, which for the first clause has "sporting themselves with their own deceivings" (*ἀπάταις*). This refers to "the feigned words" with which they have been pictured as making a gain of the unstable souls whom they lead astray. They find a sport in their delusion, a pleasure, which is devilish, in the evil they are working. The other reading, *ἀγάπαις*, which is also found in Jude 12, refers to those gatherings of the faithful in the earliest period of the Church's history where the brethren by partaking in common of a simple meal gave a symbol of Christian equality and love. It may be that this in

its origin was the assembling of the congregation for "the breaking of bread," but we soon find the social meal had become a distinct observance. And we know from St. Paul's letter to the Church of Corinth that disorder was introduced into these meetings, and that luxury and disparity ofttimes took the place of simplicity and equality. "In your eating," says the Apostle, "each one taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken. . . . When ye come together tarry one for another" (1 Cor. xi. 21). In these Asian congregations the evil had gone to a greater length. Instead of a sober assembly, where friendly converse might form a fitting accompaniment to the more solemn breaking of bread in remembrance of their Lord, these lovefeasts were converted into a revel by the luxurious additions which the false teachers took care to have supplied. The Apostle calls them *their* lovefeasts, because it was from their conduct that the gathering took its character. The members of the Church were indeed invited, but these men made themselves leaders of the meal, and turned what was meant to be a simple repast into a scene of riot and indulgence. But such excess only opens the floodgates for more.

Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin. These preachers of freedom from the restraints of the Law must make their evil liberty known, and so they shamelessly parade it even in the meetings of the brethren. They cast about them their licentious glances, and their lustful gaze is unchecked. Nay, they have so given it rein that now it is beyond their control. Their eyes *cannot* cease from sin. The original speaks of "eyes full of an adulteress." By this unusual expression the Apostle

seems to point to the danger that such conduct would meet with a response, that the sisters in the Church would be beguiled and led to join hands with these teachers of licence. With this we may compare the language addressed to the Church of Thyatira concerning "the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, and teacheth and seduceth My servants to commit fornication" (Rev. ii. 20).

Enticing unstedfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing. A very pestilence must such men have been to the Churches. For there are always many to be found who are not established in the truth, though it be present with them, men whom the bait of a promised freedom, with its assumption of superiority, will always catch. There is in it a witchery worse even than that which, in another direction, had once before led the Galatians astray. Satan himself offers the temptation, and finds allies within men's hearts to help his cause. It is only by those stedfast in the faith that he can be withstood (1 Peter v. 9). They look beyond to-day, and to a brighter, purer joy than any which he can offer. So they are safe. But, alas! in the Churches such men are often but the remnant, and the trade of the beguiler makes its gain in every age. And it was for material gain these men were laying themselves out; and, that they might be perfect in their craft, they had put themselves, as it were, to school, gone through a training. As was said of Israel in old time (Jer. xxii. 17), their eyes and their heart are but for their covetousness, greed of defilement, and greed of gain. Children of cursing are they in a double sense: they are a curse to those whom they lead astray; and in spite of the popularity which for a time they will seem

to enjoy, there is no blessing upon them. Their doom is foretold from of old. The lamp of God's prophecy makes it clear that such men are the children of Cain.

Forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong-doing. It is an aggravation of wrong-doing when those who know the good willingly choose the evil. Of such men there is little hope. To wander is their choice; and as wrong paths are many, and the right but one, they become wanderers to the end. That the closing of their eyes was in these teachers a self-chosen course we see from the example which St. Peter has chosen to illustrate their character. Balaam, however he gained his knowledge and however unworthy he was to possess it, certainly knew much of Jehovah, and had been used to keep alive the knowledge of God among the heathen round about him; but his heart was not whole with God. To be known as the prophet of the Lord was a reputation which he prized, but mainly, as it seems, for the credit it gave him among his fellows. When the chance came, he would fain endeavour to serve two masters. It has been for ever true, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon"; but Balaam resolved to try. He thought by importunity to prevail with God for so much liberty of speech as would gain Balak's silver and gold. When his intention was thwarted, and his mouth was filled with blessings instead of curses, he still hankered after Balak's honours and money, and wrought for Israel by his counsel the curse which his lips were hindered from uttering.

And these teachers of licence in the name of freedom moved among the Christian Churches as though they were true brethren. They used Christian phrases in

their "feigned words," yet were ready to lead their followers in a way as dissolute as that which the son of Beor suggested to the Midianites (Num. xxxi. 16) that the children of Israel might trespass against the Lord. For these men's hearts were set on the hire of wrong-doing. Yet their offence was even fouler than Balaam's, for to their lust and covetousness they added hypocrisy.

But he was rebuked for his own transgression: a dumb ass spake with man's voice and stayed the madness of the prophet. The word which St. Peter here uses for "rebuke," and which is found nowhere else in the New Testament, implies a rebuke administered by argument, a refutation such as reasonable persons will yield to. The dumb ass (St. Peter's word is literally *beast of burden*) appealed to her conduct all her life through. Was I ever wont to do this unto thee? Should I do so now without good reason? The reason was made plain at the sight of the angel. That presence made the rider bow his head and fall on his face. But what excuse was there for his lawlessness? For that is the sense which the Apostle puts on Balaam's transgression. And the word which he adds makes the rebuke more strong. It was *his own* transgression. The swerving of the dumb beast was not of herself. She would have held to the right way had it been possible, but her master's lawlessness was very madness; and he was the prophet, she the speechless brute. It has been said, *Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.* But the proverb is not true. The destruction is not of God's will; the madness comes of a self-chosen course of rebellion. Ever God's voice is, as it was of old, "It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against Me, against thy help"

(Hos. xiii. 9). The ruin is self-destruction, an infatuation which will accept no remonstrance, brook no check. For the warning voice of the dumb beast only hindered Balaam's evil project for a brief moment; and though the Divine power which loosed the tongue of the ass kept her master's in check, the maddening greed for Balak's gold was in his heart, and at all costs would be satisfied, and led him to destruction. Such is the penalty of those who willingly desert the right way through love of the hire of wrong-doing. In forsaking God, they forsake the fountain of wisdom. Then their lawlessness degrades their human endowments to the level of the brutish, and the obedient drudging of the dumb beasts of burden speaks loud—for God gives it a tongue—against the mad errors of rebellious men.

XXV

ALTOGETHER BECOME ABOMINABLE

XXV

ALTOGETHER BECOME ABOMINABLE

"These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm; for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved. For, uttering great swelling *words* of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error; promising them liberty, while they themselves are bond-servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire."—2 PETER ii. 17–22.

THE Apostle now describes these traitors to the cause of Christ under another aspect. They proffer themselves as guides and teachers. As such they should be sources of refreshment and help. But in every respect they belie the character which they have assumed. *These are springs without water.* The blessing of a spring is only known to the full in Eastern lands. Hence it is that in Bible language wells and fountains are constantly used as emblematic of happiness. When Israel is brought out of Egypt, their destination is described as "a land of fountains." Mental and spiritual blessings are pictured by this

figure: "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life" (Prov. x. 11); "The wellspring of wisdom is a flowing brook" (Prov. xviii. 4). The invitation which the prophet publishes in God's name runs, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isa. lv. 1); and the gracious promise is, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isa. xii. 3). To those who had been accustomed to language of this sort St. Peter's words convey a picture of utter disappointment. Where men had a right to expect that they would find brightness and refreshment, where they were promised an oasis in the world's desert, there proved to be only a delusive mirage; and for this the brethren were beguiled to forsake the living waters which Christ has promised to His faithful ones. *And mists driven by a storm.* Here the same thought is put into another shape. Mists, resting above the ground, play a part like that of the watersprings beneath. They protect from scorching heat, and drop down blessing on the thirsty land. But when they are chased away by the whirlwind, they can furnish neither protection nor nourishment. And so helpless for those who followed them were these apostles of licence. Like mists they were, it is true, but only in their blinding influence. They brought with them blasts of vain doctrine, in their craftiness, after the wiles of error, and so created a desolation for those who sought unto them. We cannot help comparing this description with the ever-increasing illumination that flows from the lamp of prophecy, making the world's dark places light.

For whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved. Yes, for these also God has a destiny in store. It is reserved, as is the incorruptible inheritance (1 Peter i. 4) which awaits His faithful ones. But it is in those pits

of darkness to which the rebellious angels were committed. Yet even in the Apostle's language there shines out somewhat of God's mercy. The sinner's doom is certain, but the blow has not yet fallen; the blackness of darkness is prepared, but was not prepared for men. Only those fall into it who persist in their rebellion. For them, in the words of Christ, it will be the outer darkness, where is the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

For, uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error. St. Peter's words are here very aptly chosen to contrast the boastful pretensions of these corrupters with the hollowness and delusion of all they promise. St. Jude (16) tells of the great swelling words, but does not add that further touch which proclaims their emptiness; St. Paul (1 Tim. i. 6) says that such men fall to their vain and boastful talking because they have swerved from purity of heart, from a good conscience, and from faith unfeigned. From such there is nothing to be expected but falseness and unreality; they arrogate to themselves a penetration which others have not. Theirs it is to have found a deeper meaning in revelation, to have worked their way to a freedom beyond the rest, a freedom in the midst of sin, which imparts to those who attain to it a freedom to sin with impunity. Thus do they entice in the lusts of the flesh by lasciviousness. Such a liberty suits the natural man; such guides find many to follow them.

True Christian freedom, the freedom of St. Paul, calls for constant watchfulness, earnest anxiety at every step, for life is full of treacherous roads. But forethought and carefulness are lacking for the most part in those

who have just escaped from the entanglements of error. "I buffet my body," was the Apostle's rule, "and bring it into bondage" (1 Cor. ix. 27). This was the discipline to free the soul. And to others he preaches in his letter to Timothy that "the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (2 Tim. ii. 11). But mark the pathway which leads to this life: "Instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Such precepts these men mocked at. There was a nobler knowledge, they said, a higher initiation. To this they had attained; to this they beguiled their followers.

Such men are unspeakably dangerous to those who have made but little progress in spiritual life. It is only those who, like Nehemiah of old, have become firm of purpose through prayer to the God of heaven, and know the dangers that everywhere beset them, that can withstand such temptation. As he laboured amid the ruins of Jerusalem, which he was so zealous to restore, there came to him the invitation of the Samaritans, "Come, let us meet together; . . . let us take counsel together" (Neh. vi.). No doubt the village in the plain of Ono, to which they asked him to come, was a pleasanter place just then than the bare hill-top of Zion, with its desolation and ruins. But his heart misgave him at the words of such counsellors. "They thought to do me mischief." And his sturdy answer to the tempters is a pattern and a lesson for all time: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." For it is always to come *down* that such counsellors invite us, not to be afraid of putting ourselves on their level. They may cloke it under the name of elevation, as these Asian tempters did. They talk of this as liberty and power, just as the

archfiend himself spake to the Saviour, tempting Him to a boastful display of His trust in His Father: "Cast Thyself down." Those who fall fall in this way, by a too ready yielding to some acceptable bait; and then they find themselves, not free, but prisoners. And the weak in the faith, those who are only just escaped from error, are those from among whom the deluders seek and find their victims.

Promising them liberty, while they themselves are bond-servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. Here we have two views of the same persons. First their own picture. They proclaim their superiority in lofty terms. Satan and his servants have always been liberal with promises. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me," are sample speeches of the arch-tempter. And these men follow their master; but, says the Apostle, they are themselves in the grossest slavery. He personifies Destruction as a power who holds them in her chains. And the idea sets sin before us in a terrible light. It begins in the single act, over which men fancy they have entire control; but the acts become a habit, and this, like a mighty, living power within men, but beyond their sway, overmasters their whole being, and drives them at its will. In the case of these men, no faculty was free; their very eyes could not cease from sin.

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. *Corruptio optimi pessima* is a well-known and very true dictum, and the Apostle sets these false

teachers before us as a notable illustration of it. The backsliders, the renegades who desert a good cause, are sure to exhibit intense hostility to the position from which they have fallen away. They are constrained to do so that men may think they have a warrant for their conduct; and often they have an uneasy conscience, which they must try to silence by large assertion of the rectitude and wisdom of what they do. Satan himself is the great instance. The state from which by rebellion he fell was unspeakably glorious, a life in the presence of perfect holiness. Now he takes his pleasure in marring everything that is holy, in defiling God's world and filling it with pollution through the sin which he has introduced.

These Asian backsliders had tasted the good grace of God. The Apostle speaks of their knowledge of Christ as that true comprehension of His love and mercy which draws men away from the world and its allurements. They had escaped and found a camp of refuge. But to take service under Christ means to bear the cross, and to bear it patiently. Jesus puts His servants to the proof, and not all who have set their hands to the plough continue stedfast in their work till the harvest comes. They halt in the process of that growth of grace which St. Peter describes in the first chapter of this letter. In their temperance they should provide patience, endurance in well-doing. Many, however, persevere but for a little time; and the world seizes the opportunity of their doubt and hesitation, comes forward with its allurements, and captures the weak in faith. And such were these men, and their capture was fatal. They were now in the toils of a net from which there was little chance of escape; they were overcome and made very slaves. In their first efforts to walk with Christ

they had been enabled to wrest themselves away from their evil life; but now they were sunk down, over-powered, and blind, with a blindness the more terrible because they had known what it was to have sight. Their last state was unspeakably worse than the first.

St. Peter has in mind the parable of his Master (Matt. xii.; Luke xi.) which was spoken prophetically of the Jewish people. There Christ tells of the evil spirit which has been cast out, but no attempt made to fill his place with a better tenant. Soon finding no rest, he returns, and beholds his former home swept, and garnished, and unoccupied. Then he goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than himself, who enter with him and dwell there. With what solemn meaning come those words which follow the parable, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and *keep* it"! (Luke xi. 28). To have heard, and not to have kept, indeed makes the last state worse than the first.

For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. These words of the Apostle point out the fear and care which should possess the hearts of those whom God blesses with large opportunities: fear lest they receive them amiss and fail to value them; care lest they pervert them to a wrong use. Our Lord's own words form the mightiest homily thereon when He spake to those cities of Galilee upon whom a great light was shining as He dwelt in their midst, but He could not do His mighty works there because of their unbelief. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Hence the solemn denunciations of woe upon them: "It shall be more tolerable in the judgement for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for them"; "The queen

of the south shall rise up in the judgement against them and condemn." And more sorrowfully still He speaks to Jerusalem: "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Christ went away unto the Father, but He left the Apostles their commission to teach the way of righteousness as He had taught it. "Teach them," He says, "to observe all things whatsoever I have told you; and lo, I am with you always." By the ministrations of St. Paul and his fellow-labourers the feet of these Asian converts had been set in the right way. They had made a profession of faith in Christ's sacrifice, and thus had been reckoned among the righteous, among those called to be saints. But the journey unto righteousness is made by daily steps in keeping God's law; and if these be not taken, the road may lie open, the traveller may see it, but he comes no nearer to the goal. Nay, in this road there is no standing still. They who fail to press forward inevitably slide back. It was here that these false teachers had failed. The command of God checked their evil appetites and greed; and so they set it at defiance and turned aside, and taught their deluded followers that God's freedom in its highest sense meant a licence to sin.

Here one of the Apostle's words is very significant. He says, not holy commandments, but holy commandment, telling us thus that the Divine law is all comprehended in the right ordering of the heart. In principle all God's laws are one. If that inward source of all our right and wrong be kept pure, from it are the issues of life; and every action flowing from it will then have a righteous aim. Thus men lead holy lives; thus they keep God's commandments in every relation.

They do not in this life become free from offence; they stumble, because they are compassed by infirmity. But they act from a right motive; and this, and not the sum-total of results, is what the loving Father of men regards. Thus the Divine law is the law of true freedom, supplying a principle, but leaving the particular actions to develop according to the circumstances of each man's life. This is the freedom of which the Psalmist sings: "I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts" (Psalm cxix. 45); and one of our own poets extols a life so ordered by Divine law as the truest, grandest freedom:—

> "Obedience is greater than freedom. What's free?
> The vexed straw on the wind, the tossed foam on the sea;
> The great ocean itself, as it rolls and it swells,
> In the bonds of a boundless obedience dwells."

It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire. To describe in all its horror the abysmal depth to which these false teachers have sunk, the Apostle makes use of two proverbs, one of which he adapts from the Old Testament (Prov. xxvi. 11), while the other is one which would impress the Jewish mind with a feeling of utter abomination. The dogs of the East are the pariahs of the animal world, while everything pertaining to swine was detestable in the eyes of the Israelite. But all the loathing which attached to these outcasts of the brute creation did not suffice to portray the defilement of these teachers of lies and their apostate lives. It needed those other grosser features—the return to the disgorged meal; the greed for filth, where a temporary cleansing serves, as it were, to give a

relish for fresh wallowing—these traits were needed ere the full vileness of those sinners could be expressed.

Solomon spake his proverb of the fool who goes back to his folly; but of how much grosser lapse is he guilty who, having known the mercy of Christ, having tasted the Father's grace, having been illumined by the Holy Spirit, turns again to the world and its pollutions, goes back into the far country, far away from God, and chooses again for his food the husks that the swine did eat!

XXVI

AS WERE THE DAYS OF NOAH

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AS WERE THE DAYS OF NOAH

"This is now, beloved the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles; knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."—2 PETER iii. 1–4.

IN the previous chapter the Apostle showed how the renegade false teachers had published among the brethren their seductive doctrine, declaring that God's fatherly discipline was something which they need not undergo, that the trials which He sent them might be escaped, and the natural bent of man's heart indulged as fully as they pleased. The foul results of such lessons both to the flock and to the teachers he also depicted in such wise as to render them abhorrent. Now he tells of a further lesson which these guides on the downward road added to the former. Those who do not accept God's judgements here soon go on to deny the coming of judgement hereafter. It could hardly be otherwise. The wish is father to the thought as truly in matters of faith as of practice. Men whose lives are all centred on this world must try and convince themselves, if possible,

that the day of the Lord, of which God's word speaks so often, is a delusion, and may be cast out of their thoughts. This these men did, and it is against this scoffing of theirs that St. Peter directs his exhortation in this chapter.

This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you. Judging from the adverb which he uses (ἤδη, now, already), we should conclude that no long time had elapsed between the Apostle's first letter and the second. And by calling this the second, he shows that it is intended for the same congregations as the former, though he has not named them in the salutation with which the letter opens. Aforetime they had been tried by inward questionings, and he sent them his exhortation and testimony that, spite of all their trials, this was the true grace of God which they had received, and therein they should stand fast (1 Peter v. 12). Now the danger is from without: false doctrine and evil living as its consequence. So, though he may have written but a little while ago, he will neither spare himself, nor neglect them. For the danger is of the utmost gravity. It threatens the overthrow of all true Christian life.

And in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance. Mark how trustfully he appeals to the sincerity of the minds of the brethren, just as before (i. 12) he said they knew the things of which he was putting them in remembrance, and were established in the truth which they had received. And what he means by the "mind" we may see from 1 Peter i. 13, where he uses the same word: "Gird up the loins of your mind"—do not indulge vain, lax, and speculative opinions, as though these would forward you in your travel through the world—"be sober, and

set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you." A mind so braced looks onward to the revelation of Jesus Christ, looks for every token of its drawing nigh. And because it is sincere, the man dare look into its inmost recesses, and by self-examination and discipline maintain its purity. He can think soberly of the Lord's coming because he is preparing for it. But he whose mind is dark, within whom the light has been turned into darkness, dare not think on these things, but with all his might endeavours to forget, ignore, and deny them. All that St. Peter thinks needful for these Asian brethren is that he should remind them. He knows that men's minds are prone to slumber, especially about the things unseen as yet; and his aim is to rouse them to thorough vigilance. But he has no new lesson to give them.

That ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets. On few themes do the prophets dwell more earnestly than on those visitations of Jehovah which they publish as the coming of the day of the Lord. With Joel (ii. 11, 32) it is to be a time great and terrible, the prospect of which is to move men to repentance, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered. And Israel were taught in many ways that this great day was constantly at hand. They were pointed to it by Isaiah (xiii. 6) when the overthrow of Babylon was foretold. For that nation the day of the Lord was coming as destruction from the Almighty. Jeremiah (xlvi. 10) and Ezekiel (xxx. 3) preach the same lesson, with the ruin of Egypt for their text. It is a day of vengeance, when the Lord God of hosts will avenge Him of His adversaries, a day of clouds, in which a sword shall come upon Egypt, and her foundations shall be broken

down. By what they beheld around them God's people were to learn that a like day would come upon them also, upon everything that was high and lifted up against God; and for those who were unprepared another prophet (Amos v. 18) declared that it would be darkness, and not light. Before its coming, therefore, they were urged (Zeph. ii. 3) to turn to the Lord, that they might be hid in the day of His anger. For God designed by it to make Himself King of all the earth (Zech. xiv. 9), wherefore it would be great and terrible. For though Elijah should first be sent (Mal. iv. 5) to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, in its manifestation that day should still be like a refiner's fire to purge the evil from among the good.

Not without solemn purpose were all these words written aforetime, and the Christian preachers who felt that God was faithful were sure that such a day would come upon all the earth. How it would be manifested was for God, and not for them. Some of those who lived when St. Peter wrote beheld part of its accomplishment in the overthrow of the Holy City. But they felt—and their lesson is one for all time—that it is presumptuous in men to compute God's days, and that it is rebellious blindness not to acknowledge the coming of His day continually in the great crises of history. How many a time since St. Peter spoke has the Lord proclaimed by partial judgements the certainty of that which shall come at the last. The day of the Lord is attested when empires fall, when hordes of barbarians break in upon the civilised world that has grown careless of God, when convulsions rage like those which preceded the Reformation and which shook Europe at the French Revolution, and we

may add to these the troubles which harass our own land to-day. All these things preach the same doctrine; all proclaim that verily there is a God that judgeth the earth. Not yet is the voice of prophecy silent. Oh that men would but remember how long and how surely it has been speaking!

And the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles. In connexion with the subject on which he is writing, the commandment of Jesus to which St. Peter alludes can hardly be other than that which occurs in the address of our Lord to His disciples after His last visit to the Temple: "Watch therefore, for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh; . . . therefore be ready, for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. xxiv. 42). And with the last judgement in his thoughts, we cannot fail to be struck with the frequency with which the Apostle in this letter repeats as the title of Christ "the Lord and Saviour" (i. 11; ii. 20; iii. 2, 18). This precise form occurs in no other part of the New Testament. And it seems from the Apostle's use of it as though, while speaking of the certainty of the coming of the day of the Lord, he desired to give special prominence to the thought that to such as were looking for Him He would manifest Himself as the Saviour and Redeemer.

The words "your apostles" also appear to be used with design. They contain a direct acknowledgment of the mission of St. Paul as an apostle. By him more than by any other had these regions been brought to the knowledge of Christ, and we may rest confident that the gospel which he preached elsewhere he preached to them also. The lesson of watchfulness is oft repeated in his letters. To the Corinthians he

writes, "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong" (1 Cor. xvi. 13), while, in connexion with this subject of the day of the Lord, his words to the Thessalonians are, "Ye yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. . . . But ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. v. 2–6). St. Peter's letter was to be read in those Galatian Churches whose members in past days had doubted about the apostolate of St. Paul. Its warnings would sink the deeper because enforced by the authority of him who even in his rebukes had spoken to them as his "little children" (Gal. iv. 19).

Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery. St. Peter says the mockers will come; Polycarp[1] says in his day they had come. He terms them the first-born of Satan, and tells how they pervert the oracles of the Lord to their own lusts and deny that there is either resurrection or judgement. The signs of the times were not difficult to read; and the Apostle would have the brethren know what to look for, know in such wise that they should not be shaken in mind by what they saw or heard. For this the first need was Christian sobriety. Thus settled, they could ponder on the words of ancient prophecy and recall the lessons of those who had spoken to them in the name of Christ; and therewith their hearts might take comfort, and their heads be lifted up with expectation, knowing the last days were bringing their redemption nearer. The mockery of the sinners would keep no bounds. This

[1] *Ad Phil.* vii.

he expresses by his emphatic words, just as largeness of blessing is described: "In blessing I will bless thee."

Walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? They would be a law unto themselves, and so they followed an evil law. As sinners before them had said, "Our lips are our own" (Psalm xii. 4), so these men by act and word alike proclaimed, "Our lives are our own, to use as we please. We have no account to give." Thus they made themselves bondslaves to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and, with these fetters heavy about them, boasted of their liberty. They strengthened themselves in their evil way by jeering at the thought of Christ's return to judgement. "We have heard of the promise," they said, "but we see no signs of its fulfilment. The angels, you say, spake of His return when He was taken away from you. Let Him make speed and hasten His coming, that we may see it. You are for ever speaking of it as sure and pointing us back to the ancient Scriptures, as though they were a warrant for what you preach. 'Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come now' (Jer. xvii. 15).

For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. Here the mockers pass from the promise of Christ's return, and fall back upon the more distant records as supplying a stronger argument. "The fathers" of whom they speak cannot be the Christian preachers. Not many of them could as yet have fallen asleep in death. But the ancient prophets of the Jewish Scriptures had long ago passed away, and against them the scorners direct their shafts. "Centuries ago," they urge, "the prophetic record was closed; and its final utterance

was of the day of the Lord, which has not yet come." Their word "fell asleep" may have also been used as part of their mockery, classing the words of prophecy among baseless dreams. It may be they intended a special allusion to that one among the prophets who dates the time of the Lord's coming. Daniel (xii. 12) speaks of a waiting which shall last a thousand three hundred and five-and-thirty days. But say these scorners, "When his word was complete, he was bidden, 'Go thou thy way till the end be. For thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.' He has fallen asleep, and the other fathers also. They all are at rest, and the end of the days is no nearer. The world stands fast, and will stand. It has seen no change since it was brought into existence."

Those who in faith clung to Christ could not fail, as they heard these scorners, to think of the Master's question, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith in the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8), and of those other words of His which told them that the last days should be a parallel to the days of the Deluge: "As were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall be the coming of the Son of man" (Matt. xxiv. 37–39). The strong earth was under the feet of those antediluvian mockers, the firmament above their heads. So in ignorance they jeered at what they would call the folly of Noah. But the Flood came, and then they knew. Yet the last days have seen, and will see, men as blind and as full of satire and scoffing as they.

XXVII

JUDGEMENT TO COME

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JUDGEMENT TO COME

"For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men."—2 PETER iii. 5–7.

"THE world lasts on" (διαμένει) "through all time," say the scoffers, "just as it was at the Creation. There has been no change; there will be none." But out of their own mouth their folly is rebuked. How can these men speak of a creation? If there is to be no Judge, why believe that there has been a Creator? That must be included in the general denial. *For this they wilfully forget.* Yes, here is the reason of their conduct, the root of all the evil. They forget because they wish to forget; they speak of the fathers, but of set purpose ignore the history of Noah; they are casting God out of all their thoughts: and so even to the things that are made, and by which He testifies to all men alike His eternal power and Godhead, they close their eyes, and refuse to read His wide-open lesson-book. And still less do they regard all that His written word records of the world's past history and God's discipline for men therein.

That there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God. They close their ears as well as their eyes. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' As the study of nature progresses men are learning to comprehend more of the vastness of that phrase "in the beginning," and in the light of science to read a larger meaning into St. Peter's words, "There were heavens from of old." But even in that generation to which the Apostle soon alludes the unchanging character of the skies spake of duration and permanence. The antediluvian world had run a long course; from Adam to Noah men had beheld the sun rise and set daily in the skies, just as it rose on the morning of the Deluge. And the mockers then living could say, and doubtless did say, to the preacher in their midst, "These things have always been as they are, and will be so for evermore." The later scorners had their prototypes of old, who pointed to the existence of an eternal law, and wilfully forgot that law implies a lawgiver, and that He who made must have the power to unmake.

St. Peter takes their text, but reads from it a very different lesson. There were heavens from of old, yea, long before there was an earth fit for man to dwell in. This world in that old time was formless and void, and the waters covered its face like a garment. The word of the Lord went forth, and the waters were gathered together as a heap, and the depth was laid up in God's storehouses. Then the dry land appeared; then there was an earth. The streams took their appointed place down the mountain-sides and in the valleys, and rivers began to roll onward to the sea; the waters of ocean learnt their bounds, neither turned again to cover the

earth. The Divine word clothed in all the glory of vegetation the hitherto barren land, making it a fit home for man, who was not yet; and the water ministered sustenance to everything that grew out of the ground. Birds, beasts, and fishes were made, and the waters were the birthplace of most of these. For God said, "Let the water bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life," not its own tenants only, but fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. So there was an earth, not the bare ground only, but the whole wealth of vegetable and animal life; and this was all existent, compacted, supported out of water and by means of water (δι' ὕδατος). For without it nothing could have flourished. God had laid up water above the firmament and water below the earth, and by means of watery vapour refreshed and blessed everything that grew. This was the reign of God's law, and ere the Flood came men could point to it and say, "What mean you to talk of a deluge? The sand is made the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; the earth is set high above the waters, and has been so from old time." But that long duration did not hinder the same productive, nurturing water being turned, by the word of the Lord, into an agency of destruction.

By which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. Every word in the Apostle's sentence is meant to tell. God employed as means of overthrow the very powers which at first He ordained for blessing. His word makes things what they are. The reign of law endures until He, who is before all law and the source of all law, gives another direction to those forces which His law has always been con-

trolling. In this way the world that then was, the world which had endured and been stedfast from the Creation to the Flood, perished. The world was full of order, full of glory. The name (κόσμος) expresses all this. Yet, for the sin of man, it repented God that He had made this glorious order; and this it was which perished. The earth was not destroyed; it only received again that covering of primeval waters which, at God's word, had retired and let the dry land appear. At the same word both earth and heaven combined to destroy the goodliness with which creation was adorned. For, on the day of the Deluge (Gen. vii. 11), all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the waters came again to cover the earth. They prevailed exceedingly, and all flesh died that moved upon the earth; even the fowls and the moving creatures, which had been brought forth from the teeming waters, perished, and all things were destroyed from off the earth. Thus does St. Peter lay bare the unwisdom of those who will not listen to, who are wilfully forgetful of, the parables of God's word, who close their eyes to His judgements, sent that by them men may learn righteousness.

But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire. The Apostle now turns away from what the Old Testament Scriptures relate as history of the past to what the same records teach us concerning the future; and he deals partly with promise, partly with prophecy. The earth will not be destroyed again by a deluge. God hath made His covenant: "I will establish My covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood, neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth" (Gen. ix. 11). But there

will be a judgement; and then not, as in the days of Noah, will the *κόσμος*, the beautiful order of nature, alone be destroyed, but heaven and earth alike shall be involved in the common overthrow. Here the Apostle is but the expositor of the words of psalmists and prophets of the older times. He who sang, "Of old Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands," was inspired to add, "They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed" (Psalm cii. 25). Isaiah, the evangelist among the prophets, saw more, and connects this mighty change with the day of the Lord's vengeance: "Then shall all the host of heaven be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isa. xxxiv. 4); and in another place he foresees how "the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner, . . . for Mine arms shall judge the people" (Isa. li. 6); and yet again in more solemn wise, "The Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury and His rebuke with flames of fire, for by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh" (Isa. lxvi. 15). And this he proclaims as the preparation for "the new heavens and the new earth which He will make." Daniel also tells us of God's "throne of judgement to be set, which is like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire" (Dan. vii. 9).

With such light from the lamp of prophecy, the Apostle in his exegesis proclaims the nature of the final judgement. Like other New Testament writers, he has attained, since the day of Pentecost, a deeper insight

and a firmer grasp of the purport of what Moses in the Law and the prophets did write. We can see how on that very day thoughts like these which he expresses in his letter were borne in upon his mind. For not only does he apply the prophecy of Joel to the events which then struck the multitude with wonder, but he carries on the lesson further to the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord, and reminds his hearers that then God "will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath, blood and fire and vapour of smoke, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood" (Acts ii. 19). And the like illumination had been bestowed on St. Paul. For he too tells (1 Cor. iii. 13) of a day when each man's work shall be proved by fire; and more definitely he assures the Thessalonians, to whom he wrote much concerning the day of the Lord, that there will come a "revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 8).

In such wise did the Apostles read the utterances of prophecy; and thus did they apply them as lessons for their own and all future times. They felt that not unto themselves, but unto us, did the prophets minister. And St. Peter does but put their message into his own words when in his bold figure he says that the heavens that now are and the earth are stored up for fire.

The Revised Version on its margin renders the last words "stored with fire." And when we reflect on the storing of the waters at the Creation, afterwards to be let forth to destroy the world which hitherto they had made fruitful and lovely, the parallelism is very suggestive. God has stored the earth within with fire, which

from time to time makes its mighty presence and power for destruction known. The visitations of earthquakes may therefore well remind us that He who used the treasures of waters in the Deluge for His ministers may in like manner hereafter employ this treasury of fire.

Being reserved against the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men. When God no longer waits for sinners to repent, then will come the judgement and destruction of the ungodly. At that day the heavens that now are and the earth shall be exchanged or transformed. God will prepare a new heaven and a new earth wherein the righteous may find a congenial home with their Lord. Here they can never be other than pilgrims and sojourners, seeking to be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven. What the destruction of the ungodly shall be we can only judge and speak of in the terms of Scripture. The language of St. Paul to the Thessalonians seems to teach us that the very advent of the Judge shall bring their penalty: "They shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction" (the word is not the same which St. Peter uses) "from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might" (2 Thess. i. 9), in the presence of which nothing that is defiled can dwell. So God, of His mercy, still reserves the heavens and the earth, and thus to every new generation offers His mercy, saying continually through their silent witness, in the spirit in which He spake to Israel at the close of the volume of prophecy, "I am Jehovah"—that is, the merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin—"I change not; therefore ye sinners are not destroyed."

XXVIII

THE LORD IS NOT SLACK

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"But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."—2 PETER iii. 8, 9.

"ALL things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," said the mockers. It was foolish therefore to believe in, or to think of, a judgement to come. In the words before us the Apostle not only supplies an answer to the scorners, but gives a precious lesson to Christians for all time on the nature of God and His government of the world. It is but a single thought, but when the mind of the believer has grasped its significance, he will look out upon the world untroubled. No mockery will disturb his faith.

But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Here the Apostle quotes some words from that psalm (xc.) which is entitled "A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God." In it the Psalmist is contrasting God's eternity with the frailty of man and the shortness of human life. "A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past." But St. Peter not only adopts, but adapts, the words for his own purpose.

He wants to teach the Christians in their trials that, while what is long in man's estimation may in God's providence be counted but little, yet through God's decree what to man appears little may be big with mightiest consequences. He therefore first inverts the words of the Psalmist. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, while a thousand years may be as one day. One day of His deluge swept a whole generation out of the world, while His day of Pentecost remains potent in the history of His grace for all the ages which are yet to come. Through a mistaken literalness, men have sometimes expounded the lesson as if Jehovah's dealings were a question of arithmetic. Nothing could be farther from the Apostle's thought, who would have us know that of great and little God's work makes no account. With Him there is no short or long in time. What He does is not to be measured by the petty standards of humanity.

Men *must* take note of time, for they feel its lapse and its loss. They are ever conscious that a period is coming after which what is undone must continue undone. Again, the length of time is known to them by the recurrence of the various acts of life, and by the weariness which comes of continued labour, and by the grief of protracted waiting. These things force them to speak of short and long, but with God it is not so. For Him all time is one. He knows nothing of toil. Whatsoever He pleaseth, that doeth He in heaven and in earth, in the sea and in all deep places (Psalm cxxxv. 6). The Psalmist had attained a true conception. The whole world and all worlds were in His control, and their order the working of His eternal will. He needs no rest; He slumbereth not, nor sleepeth. To Him there is no waiting, no weariness.

Hence the past, the present, and the future are for Him one unbroken now.

This is the one thing which the Apostle offers to the Christian brethren for their support and consolation against the scoffers. And the knowledge is mighty for those who grasp it. It helps them to cast themselves securely upon the almighty arms, convinced that God's working is not to be estimated according to man's days and years, but is certain in its effect. One generation passeth away, and another cometh; but death, they learn, does not take men out of the knowledge or the hand of God, be it for mercy they are reserved, or for judgement. God does not defer His action because He lacks power to perform, neither does He tarry because He is unmindful of His servants or insensible to what they endure.

Such thoughts can minister to the faithful abundant consolation, and this was the desire of the Apostle. But they raise for all time large questions which can find no answer here, questions concerning the lot of those who pass from this brief day of life into the eternal world and have not known God's will, that they might do it; questions concerning a discipline which may yet be reserved for some who have not bent themselves to it here, perhaps from want of light; questions of how far hope may extend itself beyond the veil which divides this world from the next. Such questions rise within many earnest souls, often rather for the sake of others than themselves; but God has vouchsafed us no answer, lest men should wax presumptuous.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness. Many things conspire to make the doings of men to tarry. At one time pledges are

given beyond what foresight would warrant; and when the day of performance arrives, they are forced to plead that events have falsified their expectation, and they cannot do the things that they would. Again, men, with the most earnest zeal, attempt a work beyond their powers, and of necessity have to delay the fulfilment of their promises; while some are taken away untimely from the midst of their fellows, ere life has enabled them to achieve what they counted on once as certain. Want of knowledge, of time, and of power is the heritage of the sons of men; and therewith conspires not seldom a change of mind and consequent want of will. But He with whom is no variableness, the omnipotent, omniscient, eternal Lord of all, is subject to no hindrance. Whether events appear to men to linger or to be sudden, all move under the control of the same unchanging will. He is not slack, as men are slack, either to rescue the righteous or to punish the ungodly. Of this the son of Sirach spake: "The Lord will not be slack, neither will the Almighty be patient, . . . till He have taken away the multitude of the proud and broken the sceptre of the unrighteous, . . . till He have judged the cause of His people and made them to rejoice in His mercy" (Ecclus. xxxv. 18).

Here is a medicine for fainting souls, of whom there must have been many among these Asian Christians. And it is a solace furnished, too, by the teachings of prophecy. "The vision," says one, "is yet for an appointed time" (Hab. iii. 3). God's will has ordered when and how it shall be accomplished; all moves by His decree. "At the end it shall speak, and not lie." There is no disappointment to those who wait upon the purposes of God. "Though it tarry, wait for it,"

even though the waiting may last beyond this life, "because it will surely come; it will not tarry. The just shall live by his faith."

The order of the words in the original (ὁ κύριος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας) and the unwonted construction of the verb, of which no other example is forthcoming, have suggested to some to render thus: "The Lord of the promise is not slack." Even so the words give a powerful sense. God, who makes the promise to men, is supreme over all on which its faithfulness depends, supreme both as Maker and Fulfiller of His word. He sees and controls the end from the beginning. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

But is long-suffering to youward. The Authorised Version heads "to usward." And some have thought it more in accord with the Apostle's manner and humility to include himself with the brethren. The other reading is better supported, and none will doubt on that account St. Peter's sense of God's long-suffering towards himself. The term which he here employs to describe the Divine character implies the holding back of wrath. God might justly punish, but He stays His blow. Men have sinned, and still sin; but His love prevails above His anger. The word is formed by the LXX. translators to render one expression in that passage (Exod. xxxiv. 6) where God proclaims unto Moses the attributes by which He would be known unto men. Through all the list mercy is the dominant feature. Term upon term seems devised to magnify the tenderness of Jehovah towards His people, though at last, if the continual offers of mercy are despised, He "will by no means clear the guilty." No other language furnishes such a word, for no other people had such a knowledge of the God of all grace.

Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. We are wont to connect statements like this with the gracious messages of the New Testament. Yet some saints of earlier time felt all that St. Peter here teaches. The writer of Ecclesiasticus has some striking words. He is connecting God's mercy with the shortness of man's life, and his language anticipates in the main this teaching of the Apostle: "The number of a man's days at the most are a hundred years. As a drop of water unto the sea, so are a thousand years to the days of eternity. Therefore is God patient with them, and poureth forth His mercy upon them. The mercy of man is toward his neighbour, but the mercy of God is upon all flesh; He reproveth, and nurtureth, and teacheth, and bringeth again as a shepherd his flock" (Ecclus. xviii. 9–14). In such wise had some who waited for the consolation of Israel grasped God's promises by anticipation, seeing them afar off and being persuaded of them. Such men owned themselves, equally with the Apostle, to be strangers and pilgrims, and sought for that inheritance which Christ sent him to preach.

The word "wishing" (*βουλόμενος*) implies deliberate consent. This God does not give to the death of any sinner. If any perish, it is not because God so desired or designed. But some will ask, "Why, then, should any perish?" St. Peter in this sentence, full of grace, supplies the answer. They continue in sin, and repent not. Even offers of mercy are of no avail. But why does not the Almighty Father drive them to repentance by His judgements? Because He has made His children free, and asks from them a willing service. They are to *come* to repentance. The invitation is full and free. Christ says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour." Nay,

God makes at times a less demand: "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." Could words breathe more of mercy? To come, to look—that is the sole demand. God bestows all besides. Let men but manifest a desire, and His grace is poured forth. He wisheth not that any should perish.

And Christ, too, when He speaks of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, has the same lesson. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost all conspire to further the work of man's salvation. "All things," said our Lord, "whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore said I, He shall take of Mine, and shall show" (R.V. declare) "it unto you." But the eye to see what He shows, the ear to hear His declarations—these He asks from men. He willeth that they should *come* to repentance, and through that gate should come to Him.

XXIX

"WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YE TO BE?"

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"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—2 PETER iii. 10-13.

THE Apostle, ever earnest to put the brethren in mind of the things they had heard or read, never fails to follow his own precept. His thoughts perpetually go back to the words of Jesus, of which the passage before us is but one example out of many. "If the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched" (Luke xii. 39). So spake Christ to the disciples when urging them to be like unto servants that look for the coming of their lord. To the Master's parable St. Peter now gives its application: *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief.* He means first to mark the unexpected advent, which steals upon men when they least think of it. Sinners will have lulled themselves into security, and the thought farthest from their minds will be the all-important preparation. St. Paul uses the same

figure in speaking of the same subject (1 Thess. v. 2), from which passage the words "in the night" have found their way into the text of St. Peter, to which, as the Revised Version indicates, they do not belong. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews the Apostle has defined the preparation which, joined with patience, should keep men in readiness for the certain advent: "Exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. x. 25).

St. Peter passes on to tell of the terrors which shall attend on that day. Here also he has in mind the words of his Master, who, after a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, spake of that greater coming of the Son of man of which the overthrow of the Holy City was to be but a partial type: "There shall be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows, men fainting for fear and for expectation of the things that are coming on the world, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Luke xxi. 25; Matt. xxiv. 29). With the Lord's language for his warrant, he paints, largely in the words of the prophets of old, the things which shall befall the world in that great and notable day: *In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* Isaiah had used like words of old: "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isa. xxxiv. 4); and in another place he speaks (xxiv. 19) of the earth as utterly broken, clean dissolved, moved exceedingly; Micah has to proclaim the coming of the Lord, and he pictures it thus: "The mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be

cleft as wax before the fire" (Micah i. 4); and Nahum, describing the day of the Lord which he foresaw was coming upon Nineveh, says, "The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at His presence, yea the world and all that dwell therein." It is St. Peter's, by the light of the words of Jesus, to read their full purport into these prophetic messages, and to teach those upon whom the ends of the ages are come that all these things will have their consummation in that coming of the Lord which shall be the close of these latter days.

When thus considered his description contains many striking details. "The heavens will pass away." Christ Himself had so spoken, not of heaven only, but of the earth also. His word was the same which Peter employs, but He used it in the same sentence thus: "My word will not pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 35). That is the one thing to which we may trust. All else will be destroyed or changed. Only those who are in Christ will be fit for the new order. For them old things are passed away; behold, they are become new (2 Cor. v. 17). They have been purified by the fire of the Holy Spirit, and so can abide the day of Christ's coming.

To describe the dread process he has a striking word, which, like so many of the Apostle's expressions, is used nowhere else in the New Testament: "With a great noise" (ῥοιζηδόν). It is applied to many sounds of terror: to the hurtling of weapons as they fly through the air; to the sound of a lash as it is brought down for the blow; to the rushing of waters; to the hissing of serpents. He has chosen it as if by it he would unite many horrors in one.

Then the thought of nature's dissolution. All that

was bound together at the Creation, and then received a law of cohesion which sustained it thenceforth, will be cast loose, the compacted world dissolved. These things have been thought of as emblems of stability. God hath made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved (Psalm civ. 5), but He who made can also unmake. How foolish then must they be who bound their thoughts and aims by what the world can give, making themselves thereby of the earth, earthy, and so sure to fail when that is destroyed. And what are those works that are in the earth of which the Apostle speaks? Do the words mean no more than "the world and all that therein is," a phrase so common in Scripture? At first sight it appears so. But some most ancient manuscripts, instead of "shall be burned up," read "shall be discovered." Of this the Revised Version takes note on its margin. From this reading the mind goes to the words of the Preacher, "God shall bring every work into judgement, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Eccles. xii. 14). The sense is thus bound closer with the coming of the day of the Lord.

Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness? The Apostle says more than "are to be dissolved." His word signifies "are being dissolved." The event is so sure, and the interests involved so weighty, that he speaks of it as present, that thus he may more forcibly urge his lesson of preparation. "What manner of persons ought ye to be?" Christ had supplied the answer, and so St. Peter gives none: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord" (Luke xii. 25). The figures imply readi-

ness for any service, most of all, to an Eastern mind, readiness to set forth on a journey. Such should ever be the attitude of those who are but sojourners and pilgrims. And by his words the Apostle intimates how this preparedness should enter into every relation of the Christian life. The translation says, "in *all* holy living and godliness"; but in the Greek there is no word for *all*. Literally the words are "in holy conversations and godlinesses." In English we could not use words thus. Hence the device of the translators to come as near to the sense as is possible. But if we carry with us the thought contained in these plural words, we see how St. Peter teaches by them that in our daily life and work as well as in our religious exercises we should be ever watchful, ever ready. Our life with men and with God should be stamped as "Holiness unto the Lord." By such a walk we shall keep ourselves apart from sinners, and be helped thus far to keep away from sin. And the godliness of which he speaks springs, as he has already taught (i. 6) in this Epistle, from a patient waiting on the Lord. Thus the whole attitude of the Christian becomes one of wakeful readiness. He is of those of whom it is said, "Blessed are those servants whom their lord when he cometh shall find watching."

Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The question of the mockers, "Where is the promise of His coming?" will not disturb those whose lives are thus made ready. That coming fills their every thought, moulds every desire, controls and chastens every action. For not only do they look for it: they long for it, and earnestly desire it. For to be with Christ is far better.

Hence they hear of the melting elements and the fires of heaven without alarm. With them it is as with the Hebrew children in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. The fires which others dread, and by reason of which the heavens dissolve and the elements melt, will have no power over them save to loose their bonds, to free them from the burden of the flesh, to further that change from the natural to the spiritual which St. Paul teaches we must all undergo; while with them there will be the Son of God. And thus they will attain to their desire, and become partakers of the Divine nature.

But the translation "earnestly desiring" by no means exhausts the significance and solemnity of St. Peter's word. The Authorised Version rendered it "hasting unto the coming of the day of God"; but the word "unto" is not in the Greek, though the verb means "hastening." The word is found in the LXX. of Isa. xvi. 5, where the Authorised Version translates the Hebrew by "hasting righteousness" and the Revised by "swift to do righteousness." But though a king, as in that passage, may be said to hasten righteousness by being swift to do it, is there any sense in which men could be said to hasten the coming of the day of God? It seems as though Christ intended to set such an aim before His servants. Before He was crucified He spake that prophetic promise, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." When He had been lifted up on the cross and as a testimony to His Godhead, lifted up from the grave, He gave His commission to the Apostles: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations. . . . Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He promised His Spirit also to be their Guide into all truth.

Thus were they sent to be heralds of and labourers

for His kingdom; and one of them has testified to the abundance of the aid bestowed: "I can do all things through Christ that giveth me power." But he who thus spake could say to his converts, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 1). In this way men can lift up Christ; in this way can they draw men to Him. And to do this by examples of holy living and godliness is the work which He has committed to His Church, to let the light of Christian lives shine before men in such wise that they may be won for Him. And when we see His kingdom's slow advance, St. Peter's question is turned into a reproach, "What manner of men ought ye to be?"

But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. All creation was marred at the Fall. It groaneth and travaileth until now in pain along with the sons of men. It was made subject unto vanity, but that was by reason of God, who made it thus subject in hope that it shall be delivered, along with man, from the bondage of corruption. And that victory was promised from the first. The seed of the woman shall not always be the spoil of the serpent. The world was in many ways kept alive to this thought. A race was promised from whom all nations should be blessed. God established a kingdom to represent His rule in the world, and at length Isaiah was inspired to tell of new heavens and a new earth (Isa. lxv. 17). He too foresaw that this was for a reign of righteousness, that it pointed to a time when the wickedness of the wicked had come to an end: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither the moon by night; for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and as for thy people, they shall all be righteous." And Christ while

on earth endorsed the prophetic word: "I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there shall My servant be."

Hence St. Peter says, "According to His promise we look forward." And by using the same he identifies the new heavens and the new earth with the coming of the day of God. The believer heeds no more the mockers who ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" He can look and lift up his head, assured that his redemption draweth nigh. For his expectation has been fostered through a life of holy conversation and godliness, and the assurance of the day of God is firm, for the kingdom of God is set up within him.

And the consolation of the promise consists largely in the thought that in the new creation righteousness will dwell, will make its home. First, there will be Christ the righteous, who is also our righteousness; and all the hindrances and stumbling-blocks of this life will be removed. Here the sojourners and pilgrims abide for the time amid many foes and countless perils; then they will be delivered even from their own frailties. As their home is new-created, so they shall become new creatures. So their thought, their prayer, their struggle, is ever, *Sursum corda*; and day by day they are bound less to earth and realise more of heaven.

"The distant landscape draws not nigh
For all our gazing, but the soul
That upward looks may still descry
Nearer each day the brightening goal."

XXX

"BE YE STEDFAST, UNMOVABLE"

XXX

"BE YE STEDFAST, UNMOVABLE"

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as *they do* also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, knowing *these things* beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and for ever. Amen."—2 PETER iii. 14–18.

IN these solemn closing words the Apostle sums up his exhortations and warnings. His admonition is of a twofold character. First, he urges the brethren to strive after stedfastness, but to beware of sinking into a careless security which may make them an easy prey to false guides. "Stand fast," he would say, "and be ever watchful against falling." Then, let your Christian life be one of steady, constant, temperate progress; let it imitate God's works in nature, which wax, man sees not how or when, by drawing constantly from the hidden sources which minister life and increase. Let believers seek thus that in their lives there may grow from God's seed of faith first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, to yield some thirty, some

sixty, some a hundredfold, to the praise and glory of the Lord of the harvest.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight. The whole passage runs over with Christian affection; a very working out it is in a believer's life of Christ's teaching, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." Love to the brethren, love to his fellow-apostle, breathes in every line of these final sentences. Beloved are the Churches, beloved his fellow-labourer. And he is never weary of repeating that word "looking for," which marks the true attitude of the Christian pilgrim: Seeing that ye look for the coming of the day of God. Before he had said, *We* look for it; now he brings the lesson nearer home to every one of them: *Ye* are looking for these things. Be ye therefore ready. Give diligence that ye may be found in peace by Christ when He appears.

Peace is the bond which clasps together the brotherhood of Christ. But things which need a bond are prone to break asunder, and St. Paul marks the care which is needed in this matter by using the same word (σπουδάζοντες) which St. Peter employs here. And his list of the virtues which make for peace shows how much anxiety is needed: "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering forbearing one another in love, *giving diligence* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 2). Such are the graces to be fostered by those who look for the Lord's coming. The Hebrew knew no nobler word to use for blessing than "Peace be with you." Christ at His parting says to His disciples, "My peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you." It embraces reconciliation with God

and union with the brethren; it is a treasure worthy of all striving for, and when attained it passeth all understanding.

They who are looking for Christ will strive to become like Him. Christ came down from heaven and assumed humanity that His brethren might take courage for this lofty aim. The Apostle (1 Peter i. 19) has spoken of Him as a lamb without spot and blemish, and this ideal purity he now sets before the brethren. For he knows that to strive after it will sunder them from the corruptions of those false teachers whom he has called "spots and blemishes" (ii. 13) in the Christian society. Instead of denying the Master that bought them, they will be hearkening constantly for His voice. Thus will they become clean through the word which He speaks unto them (John xv. 3). For His voice is ever helpful; and abiding in Him, they will bring forth much fruit.

And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation. The mockers had made the delay of God's day the subject of their scoffing. "It tarries," said they, "because it is never coming." Their speech was, in fact, a challenge: "If it is to come, let it come now." The Christian is of another mind. His heart is full of thankfulness for the mercy which allows time for that diligence which his preparation demands. St. Paul expresses this feeling concerning God's dealings with himself: "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all His long-suffering, for an example of them which should hereafter believe on Him unto eternal life" (1 Tim. i. 16). And the opportunity thus granted him that Apostle used to the full; yet ever mindful was he not only from whom was the mercy, but also from whom came the power which was with him in his diligence: "I

laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." And in another place (Phil. i. 22), though he longs to be released from life and to be with Christ, he recognises that there may be a Divine purpose in delaying *that* day of God also, that to live in the flesh may be the fruit of his labour; and if this be so, he is content.

For the believer thinks not only of his own salvation and his own opportunities. The Christian's faith is not selfish. He beholds how large a part of the world is not yet subject unto Christ, and owns in the delay of the day of the Lord a wealth of abundant grace, offering salvation still to all who will accept it.

Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you. Some, who have restricted the allusion of St. Peter here to the "long-suffering" of God, have thought that the Epistle to the Romans is intended. That letter is the only one in which St. Paul speaks generally on this subject. In ii. 4 he asks, "Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" and, again, asks another question: "What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy?" (ix. 22). Others, considering the great subject of the day of God to be specially present to St. Peter's mind, have found parallels in the two epistles to the Thessalonians. It has also been pointed out that Silvanus was with St. Paul when these letters were written, and that through him (1 Peter v. 12) their import might have been brought to

the knowledge of the Asiatic congregations. But we know too little of the intercommunication of the Churches of Europe and Asia to arrive at a conclusion, while the definite statement "wrote unto you" seems certainly to refer to some letter addressed to the Churches of Asia. Among these, beside the Galatians, were the Ephesians and the Colossians. Reference has already been made to the way in which St. Paul speaks in his first epistle to Timothy of the long-suffering of God towards himself. Would the letter to the bishop of Ephesus be held too personal for its contents in some form to be imparted to the whole Church? Then in the Ephesian epistle such a passage as ii. 4–7 may well have been in St. Peter's thoughts: "God, being rich in mercy, . . . quickened us together with Christ, . . . that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Jesus Christ," or Col. i. 19, 20: "It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross." But there is no reason from St. Peter's words to assume that he is referring to an extant epistle. He may have known of a letter to the brethren in Asia of which we have no trace. Of one thing we may be sure: that his words had a definite sense for those to whom they were written.

But his reference to St. Paul has much interest for other reasons. Among these brethren there would be current many memories of the great Apostle to whose labour the formation of these Churches was chiefly due. His name would for them add weight to St. Peter's admonitions. The mention of the wisdom Divinely given to him would remind the Galatians at least how

foolish had been their doubts and waverings in bygone days. While, as they knew how one apostle had withstood the other when he saw that he was to be blamed, such words as these from St. Peter would come with double force. Most of all, while the teachers of error were perverting St. Paul's language for an occasion to the flesh, it was good that the Churches should be reminded that he ever taught men to strive after lives without spot and blemish and had given no licence to the excesses for which his words were offered as a warrant.

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things. From this it appears that it is the whole drift of St. Peter's letter, its warnings as well as its counsels, which is in harmony with the words of St. Paul. But we need not assume that St. Peter's readers were acquainted with all the fellow-Apostle's writings. He is telling them what his own experience has proved.

Wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. This passage is noteworthy as the only place in the New Testament in which the writings of the Apostles are regarded as ranking with the Scriptures of the old covenant. Everywhere else "Scripture" means the Old Testament. Yet, as the Apostles were passing away, it must have begun to be felt that a time was coming when great authority would attach to their words, as of persons who had seen the Lord. St. Peter has just spoken of the wisdom which was given to St. Paul. That wisdom came from the same source as the illumination of the prophets; and it is not unnatural, after such an allusion, that his writings should be classed with those of old time. Both were subjected

to the same treatment. So perversely had the Old Testament been read that when He came of whom it spake—came to those who held the volume in their hands, and who regarded it with much show of reverence—He was not recognised. His people had blinded their eyes. Just so was it faring with that "freedom" of which St. Paul had said so much to the Galatian Church. Wrested from its true meaning, it was put forward as if it gave warranty and encouragement for the life of the libertine.

That many things in the writings of St. Paul are difficult to comprehend is beyond question. He more than any of the New Testament writers works out the principles of Christ's teaching in their consequences. He deals most fully with the great questions which circle round the doctrine of redemption; with election and justification; with the casting off of God's ancient people and the certainty of their restoration; with the objects of faith, the things hoped for, but as yet unseen; with the resurrection of the body and the changes which shall pass upon it; and with the nature of the life to come. He of all men realised to the full the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of God, and spake in his letters of much which passeth knowledge.

But in St. Peter's word (*δυσνόητα*) "hard to be understood" there appears to be the thought that men's difficulties arise in part because they look on these subjects as studies for the intellect (*νοῦς*) alone, and fail for this reason to attain to the best knowledge which is given to man. It is of God's order that for the lessons which come from Him He also imparts the power of true discernment. Those who approach the study of Christian truth as a cold intellectual exercise,

in the comprehension of which heart and soul bear no part, will go away empty, and as dark almost as they come.

The "wresting" of which St. Peter here speaks may come either of the misuse of single terms, just as the apostles of licence put a wrong sense, for their own ends, on St. Paul's "liberty," or it may be the effect of severing a lesson from its occasion and its context. Such perversion also happened to St. Paul's doctrine. To those who, like the Galatians, had been drawn back to an undue estimate of the legal ordinances of Judaism, the Apostle, as a corrective, had exalted faith far above outward observances; and there soon arose those who under his language sheltered themselves in a dissolute Antinomianism. The same befell in later days when Agricola and the Solifidians perverted Luther's teaching of justification by faith. And when such misleading guides find hearers who are "ignorant and unstedfast," the false lessons, which always have the frailties of humanity to back them, gain many adherents. To the thoughtless such teaching is seductive, and is unsuspected because it puts on a semblance of affinity with truth. Hence grow those ruptures of the Christian body, those heresies which lead to destruction (ii. 1).

Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness. In the first chapter the Apostle has already (ver. 12) addressed the converts as those who knew the things of which he wrote and needed only to be put in mind, who were established in the truth, and not to be classed with the ignorant and unstedfast. Yet for all there is need of watchfulness. The lies which are abroad clothe themselves in the garb

of truth, wresting the Scriptures. "Therefore," says he, "guard yourselves" (φυλάσσεσθε). The word is not only a notice against dangers from without, but an admonition to watchfulness within. The wandering of the lawless may beguile; to many it has attractions. But if they join that company and follow with them, the end will be a shipwreck of the whole Christian life. The verb (ἐκπίπτειν) is that which we find (Acts xxvii. 26, 29) in the description of the wreck at Melita, when the sailors feared lest they should be cast ashore on rocky ground. It is against a moral peril of even more terrible character that St. Peter warns the Churches; and the contrast is most instructive which is pictured in the two words by which he defines error and stedfastness. The former (πλάνη) betokens a ceaseless wandering, a life without a plan, a voyage without rudder or compass, every stage made in doubt, uncertainty, and peril; the other word (στηριγμὸς) tells of firmness, fixity, and strength, and comes fitly into the exhortation of that Apostle whose charge was, "When thou art converted, strengthen" (στήριξον) "thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32). "This stedfastness," he says, "is now your own" (ἰδίου); "barter it not away for any illusions of wayward error."

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As if to attest his own stedfastness, he ends as he had begun. "Grace unto you and peace be multiplied," was the opening greeting of his first letter, to which in his second he adds, "through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." But there is great significance in the way in which St. Peter's words hang together in this verse. The structure of the sentence shows that he intends to say not only that grace is the gift of Jesus Christ, but that from Him

comes also all knowledge that is worthy of the name, a lesson most fitting and most necessary in those days, when teachers, who claimed to be possessors of a special higher knowledge, were denying Jesus altogether both as Master and as Judge. "Root yourselves in Christ," is the apostolic charge; "seek His help; walk by His light. Thus only can your power increase; thus only can your way be safe."

To Him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen. This is the end of the Apostle's labour: that Christ may be glorified in His servants; that they may know Him here as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, hereafter as the High-priest of His people, but deigning to become the First-born among many brethren. For those who find Him here and there also eternity will be too short to show forth all His praise.

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